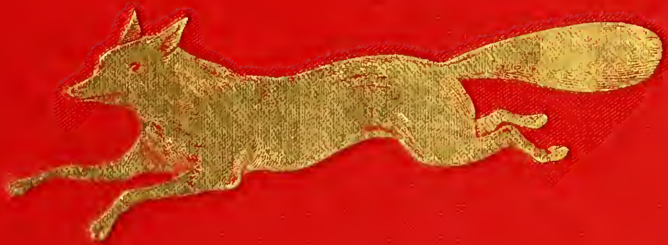

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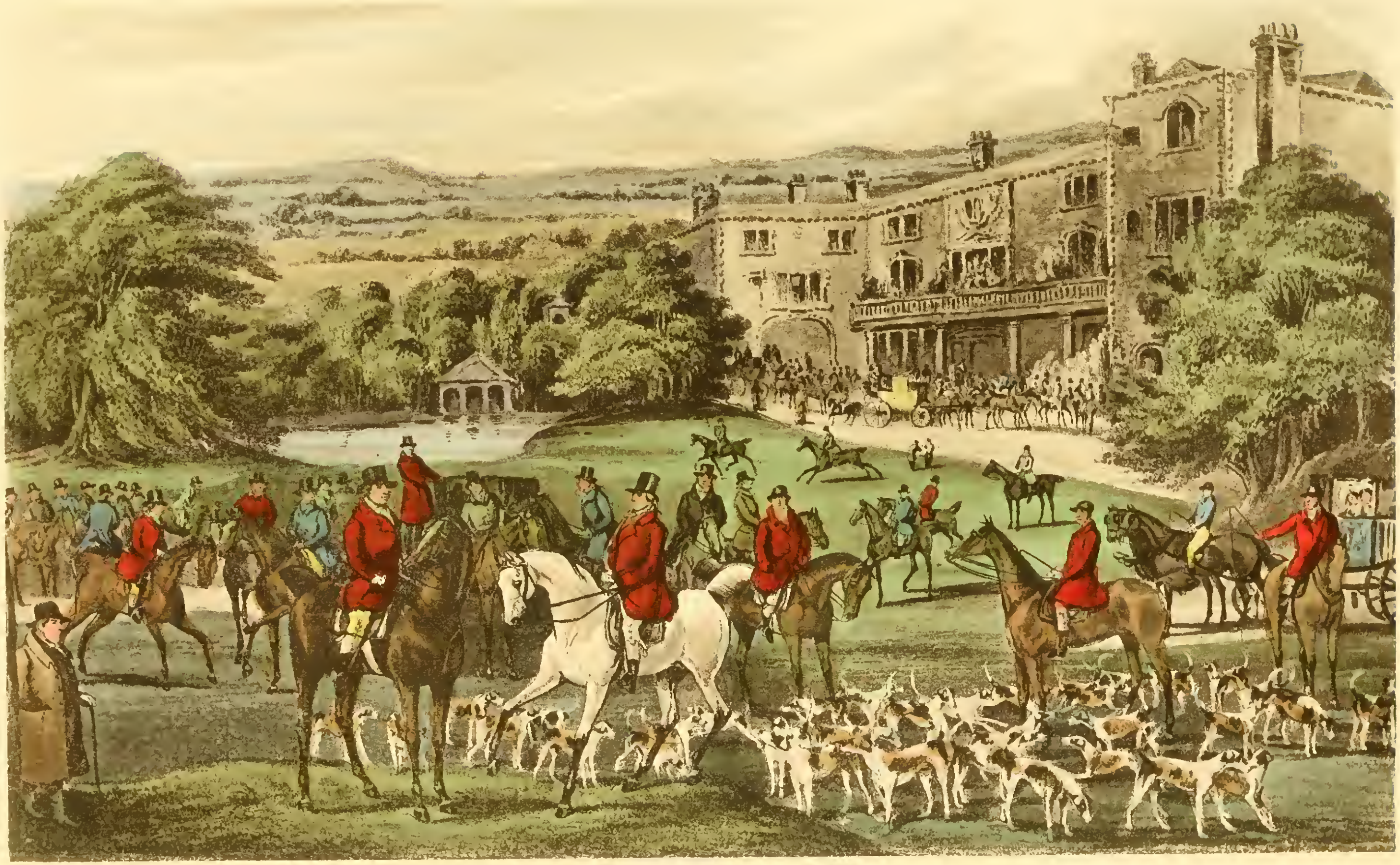

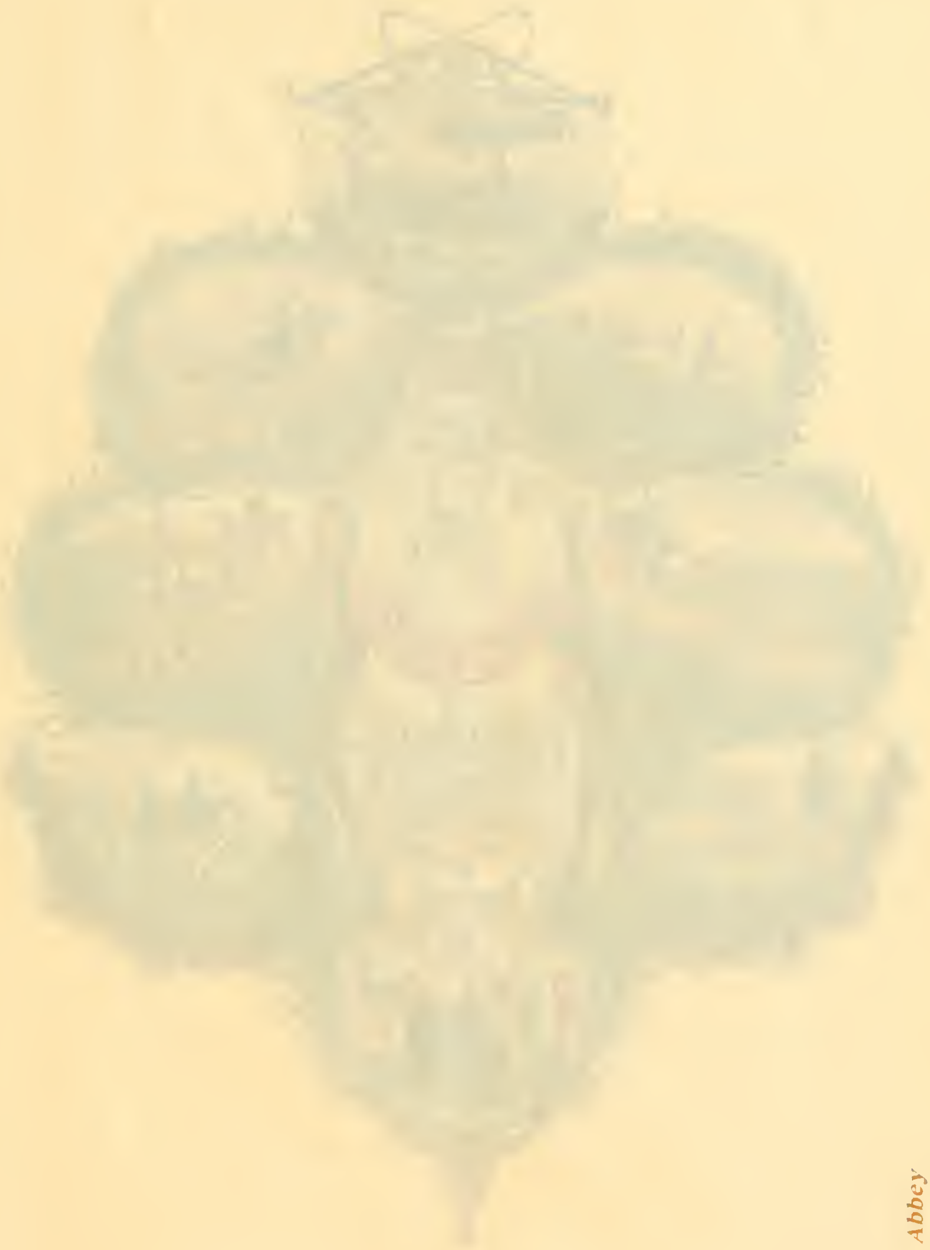

Amstead Abbey

THE
LIFE
OF A
SPORTSMAN
BY
NIMROD.

THE LIFE OF A SPORTSMAN

BY

NIMROD

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF JOHN MYTTON, ESQ."

WITH THIRTY-SIX COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS
By HENRY ALKEN

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PREFACE

My design and object in writing this work was not merely to depict the life of a *Sportsman*, in the general—perhaps with some persons, unfavourable—acceptation of that term, but, taking higher ground, to portray the character of an English gentleman attached to the sports and pastimes of his country; and, likewise, to give a sketch of a country gentleman's family, in as close imitation as possible of those of the best description, with which it has been my good fortune to become acquainted. In fact, in many instances, the imitation or resemblance is so close, as not to be doubtful to many as to who are the original parties; and they themselves cannot be displeased with my selection, when they are intended to be displayed as exemplars worthy of being followed by others.

The plan, or outline, of this half-true, half-fictitious story, is soon told. It is, as has already been observed, descriptive of a country gentleman, of large fortune and highly connected, having two sons and two daughters. He himself is a sportsman, but only to a certain extent; that is to say, he does not aspire to fox-hunting, but keeps a first-rate pack of harriers, and is also a good shot. His eldest son has nothing sporting in his constitution, but has all the good qualities that adorn and exalt our nature, and for which, of course, full credit is given him. The hero of my tale is the younger son, who, differing in tastes from his brother, enters into the sports of the field at a very early age, and becomes a thorough sportsman, in the legitimate sense of that, often wrongly applied, term. How far I have succeeded in portraying him as such, my readers must be my judges; I can only say, I have made him follow, as nearly as I was able, in the footsteps of those who, within my time and knowledge, have become the most eminent sportsmen of their day, both by 'flood and field.'

It would be unfaithful to nature, and, therefore, unworthy of my pen, were I to represent my young hero as totally guiltless of those common failings to which inexperienced youth is, for the most part, liable; but I have taken especial care to keep him clear of all vicious propensities which disgrace the gentleman and the Christian. In furtherance of this purpose, then, I occasionally place him in a dangerous position, the result of overweening confidence in others, so natural to ingenuous youth; but rescue him, in due time, partly by his own proper principles, and also by the timely assistance of a faithful and generous friend. These little aberrations are the result of his quitting the noble and health-giving sports of the field for the dangerous seductions of the race-course, which involve him in considerable difficulties, by the expenses attendant on keeping race-horses in the first instance, and by the treacherous conduct of his trainer, in the second.

The situation in which I place my hero with his uncle is drawn from real life, and with but few exaggerations or additions. No doubt there are many such uncles, and many such nephews; and the moral to be drawn from the relative situations in which I place the two in question, may be neither uninstructive nor useless. Indeed, it has been my design, throughout the entire of the work, to impart to it a moral tone, so that should those who may read it not rise the better from the perusal, it will be their own fault, and not mine. At all events, there is nothing in the sentiments expressed, or the examples put forth, to make them anywise the worse.

In his character of a sportsman, I make my hero commence with the *lowest* branches of the art, of which ratcatching is, I believe, the type. He thence proceeds to the rabbit and the badger, progressing, gradually, to the higher sports of the field, and finishes as a Leicestershire fox-hunter, and a horseman of the first class. I have also made him a coachman—that is to say, an ardent amateur of the coach-box, characteristic of the era in which I place him, which is, as nearly as may be, my own. In truth, here I am myself, in some respects, his exemplar. He commences with his pony in harness, as I myself did. He then becomes a pupil of a celebrated coachman on his road, as was my own case; and, at length, he is not only considered *safe*—that is, fit to be trusted with the ribbons—but possesses as much execution on the coach-box as falls to the lot of most aspirants to the very difficult art; and, at length, I place him in a very trying position. By the death of his elder brother, his uncle, and his father, he becomes possessed of great wealth, and he does not abuse the boon. On the contrary, he endeavours to follow his father's example in fulfilling the duties of his station, and I leave him in the possession of the esteem of his neighbours and friends, without which the riches of a Crœsus afford little real satisfaction to the possessor of them.

Then I had another object in my view. The most careless observer of the course of worldly affairs must be aware that—as has been the case in all ages—in proportion as a country has arrived at the highest pitch of wealth and refinement, the taste for the humble, but nearly unalloyed pleasures of a country life, has more or less declined.

A tendency to this decline has been, to a certain extent, observable in our own land, and fears have been expressed, lest the noblest of all our country sports—fox-hunting—may yield to this chilling, if not demoralising influence. For my own part, I do not think it will. I entertain that opinion of the force of the almost natural passion for hunting, and other manly diversions which has ever distinguished Englishmen from all other nations under the sun, that induces me to believe that it will continue to uphold fox-hunting as the pride and boast of all our national pastimes. We, however, do occasionally hear unpleasant forebodings to the contrary. 'Railroads,' says one croaker on the subject, 'spoil all hunting countries through which they pass, and one is about to traverse the cream of the Leicestershire hunts.' 'In a few years,' cries another, 'Paris and Brussels will be accessible in a few hours, as our fashionable watering-places already are.' 'Melton Mowbray falls off,' exclaims a third, 'no new settlers in the town, and the old ones will soon be giving up.' 'Young men leave off hunting after about their third season,' says a fourth. 'When many of the present masters of foxhounds shall be taken from us, none will be found masters in their stead, beyond a third or fourth season,' cries a fifth. 'Game preserves, and the accursed system of steeple-racing, is destructive of the sportsmanlike manner of riding to hounds, to the great discomfort of their owners,' says a sixth.

I am aware there is truth in some of these remarks, consequently cause for alarm; and it is on this account that I have, in these pages, striven to the utmost to give a high colour to a country life, and to represent the real modern sportsman, such as I find him to be—a character not excelled in ingenuous feelings, in liberal conduct, in extreme hospitality, in sincerity of friendship and all other social virtues, by any class in which it has been my lot to move. Where, indeed, was there a fairer or better specimen to be found than in the late Mr. Warde, fifty-seven years a master of foxhounds, and, therefore, called—'The Father of the Field'? Who ever heard him utter an ill-natured word respecting any one, either living or dead? Where was there a kinder friend, or a better neighbour? and, above all things, where was his equal as a companion? Neither can I stop here in my panegyric on this fine specimen of the old English country gentleman and sportsman. Rough as was his exterior, Mr. Warde was accomplished and well informed, and capable of adapting his conversation to any society into which he might be thrown. In short, it is a matter of doubt whether there has existed a man, whose name has not been long before the public, either in the capacity of a senator, a soldier, a sailor, or an author, so universally known as Mr. Warde of Squerries, in Kent, was to Englishmen, in all quarters of the globe. Let me, however, not be understood to exhibit him as a pattern, in all respects, for young men of the present day to imitate. Although, doubtless, the somewhat rough exterior which he adopted, was, in great part, adopted for the sake of effect to the *tout ensemble* of his character, still a more polished one than his was, may now be required, in conformity to the increased refinement of the age.

In the following pages, there may be something to amuse if not to instruct the female mind. At all events, there is a little love-making, and its results; and there is one instance of a narrow escape by my young hero, of the almost inevitable consequences of an unlawful attachment. Upon the whole, however, the bright side of human nature is displayed, and the cultivation of cheerfulness and good-humour earnestly recommended as the sovereign antidote to those mental disorders—peevishness and discontent—which distract the mind, and increase the evils of life, without even the chance of either removing or lightening them. Cheerfulness and good-humour are the harbingers of virtue, and produce that serenity which disposes the mind to friendship, love, gratitude, and every other social affection. They make us contented with ourselves, our friends, and our situation, and expand the heart to all the interests of humanity. It is in this spirit, then, that I have written, as others more worthy of the task have done before me—in that of Lucretius, indeed, when he penned the following lines:

'Sed veluti pueris absinthia tetra medentes
Cùm dare conantur, priùs oras pocula circùm
Contingunt mellis dulci flavoque liquore.'

Nimrod.

June 24th, 1842.

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THE

LIFE OF A SPORTSMAN

CHAPTER I

Introductory—The hero presented—Items of his birth, parentage, and education, together with traits of his idiosyncrasy, whereby 'coming events cast their shadows before.'

In the latter part of the last century, in one of the finest of the midland counties of England, lived Andrew Raby, a commoner, of large possessions, and of very old English blood. When, however, I use the term 'large possessions,' I do not desire to convey the idea of his having an income sufficient to keep up a degree of pomp and dignity equal to that of his titled superiors, but such as enabled him fully to support the respectable and honourable station of an English country gentleman, and to indulge in all those pursuits which were congenial to his own taste, and, likewise, to exercise almost unbounded hospitality towards his friends. In fact, his rental was a little above ten thousand pounds per annum; which, when the usual drawbacks of agencies, repairs, and other heavy outgoings attendant on landed property, in addition to an annuity he paid to a sister, were deducted, left him—for he had no interest of money to pay to mortgagees (indeed it was his boast, that no lawyer held as much parchment security of his as would cover a crown piece)—a clear annual income of seven thousand pounds; at least he reckoned not on more, on a fair average of years. With this comparatively limited income, he inhabited a house suitable for a man of twice his means. It covered three sides of a quadrangular court; displaying a sumptuous character in its architectural ornaments without, and containing elegant and spacious apartments within. Planned after the fashion of the Elizabethan age, Amstead Abbey stood on an island, formed by a deep moat, and within the palings of an extensive and finely timbered park, containing a herd of deer sufficiently ample for the use of a private gentleman; the gardens, too, were large, no less than three hundred yards of '*glass*'—as forcing-houses are technically denominated—being visible in them, exclusive of hot walls. A farm of three hundred acres of the best staple land of the county was in occupation, under the eye of a Scotch bailiff; and, having been conducted on improved principles, it greatly outstripped its neighbours in its produce, and turned to a very profitable account: the surrounding country was also of the richest and most valuable description.

Mr. Raby's establishment consisted, indoors, of a butler and two footmen, with all the requisite females, and was only deficient in one respect—it wanted the *man cook* to aid the English kitchen-maid; but against this there was a prejudice which time has since removed. At the period to which I allude, there was an objection against these *chefs* of the kitchen, on the score of wasteful extravagance in their operations; experience, however, has since shown that their art is practised to advantage in all large establishments. By the almost magical power of the *rechauffoir*, the remains of yesterday's dinner instead of being looked lightly upon, if not in great part cast to the dogs, are sent smoking and savoury into the servants' hall, and so disguised as to leave the inmates of it in doubt whether the dishes are *rechauffés* or not. His woman cook, however, was as good as high wages could procure, and his guests had no cause for complaint. But the style of living was truly English, and, as such, the assistance of *Monsieur* was less necessary: the consumption of animals was prodigious from the numbers of comers and goers, in addition to the family itself; and did a sirloin of beef make its appearance on a Sunday, and a round on the Monday, they might be looked for in vain on the Tuesday.

There was one species of luxury—refinement, indeed, it may be termed, in reference to those times—in which Mr. Raby indulged; and this was the selection of his footmen and postillions. The first were London-bred; he declared that he never saw a country-bred footman who could bring a message into a room, or an under-butler of the same genus, who could clean a service of plate; and no man's table in the country was better set out than Mr. Raby's. Of his coach-horses he was justly proud, and he liked to see them ridden and driven to his mind. His postillions—for in those days gentlemen's carriages in the country were not driven from the box—were always Hounslow-bred ones; that is to say, sons of Hounslow post-boys, having had their education on the road. His turn-out, in this respect, was perfect.

The out-of-doors establishment was still more numerous. There was a pack of harriers in the kennel, six able coach-horses in one stable, ten hunters in another, besides a hack or two to go to post, or to carry 'how do ye do's' about the country—no sinecure in those days: a capital team of spaniels for cock-shooting, pointers and setting dogs for partridges and hares, under the care of an experienced gamekeeper, and a small kennel of greyhounds to contend for prizes at the neighbouring coursing meetings. One appendage to the present establishment of an English gentleman, however, was wanting; I mean a band of night-watchers to protect the game from poachers, an operation beyond the power of any single keeper. And yet it is not to be supposed that there were no poachers of game in those days, as, in that case, Fielding's Black George would have been an anachronism; but the *battue* system was unknown. Still, of pheasants, there was a sprinkling in the woods of this estate; and the delight which the Squire and his friends experienced when they saw Juno on the foot of a pheasant, and the bird shot dead to her point, more than equalled that afforded by a *battue* of *three hundred head in one day*, the game being put up by stable-boys, without the use of dogs, the Newfoundland retriever excepted.

But the reader may well ask how all this was done on an income of seven thousand pounds.—By management, in the first place; and, in the next, by only occasionally visiting London for the season, Mr. Raby having little inclination for the bustle and hurry of a town life; and Lady Charlotte (he had married an Earl's daughter) had likewise the good sense to be satisfied with what she had seen of it, in its best form, during her residence with her father in Grosvenor Square. But the 'management!' that calls forth some remarks.

As procrastination is the thief of time, payment delayed is a thief of another description. It is not, *per se*, a robber, but it opens the door to robbery of every description; and *gentlemen* who require long *credit*, pay twenty per cent. at least for it. Mr. Raby, however, went on quite another tack in the conduct of his expenditure. In lieu of paying a bonus, that is, what is called the 'put-on-price' for long credit, he received a discount by paying ready money for everything purchased in London, or other distant places; and, in his own immediate neighbourhood, on the first Monday in every month, all his small bills were discharged. He had a list of them on his dressing-table, when he came down from his chamber in the morning, and, having examined the items, and found them correct, wrote a cheque on his banker for the amount. He reckoned that by this arrangement he saved five hundred pounds per annum, which about paid his wine-merchant's bill. It is scarcely necessary to add that, exclusive of any other consideration, this punctuality in the disbursement of a large income rendered Mr. Raby very popular in his neighbourhood; and knowing, from experience of the world, that

When the means are gone that buy this praise,
The breath is gone whereof this praise is made,

he never deviated from the practice to the last year of his life. In fact, so much esteemed was he, as a gentleman and a landlord, that he might have represented his county in Parliament, had he been disposed so to have done; but either from a disinclination to take the onus of such a responsible situation upon himself, or, it might have been, from a mistrust of his ability to do justice to it, it devolved upon a neighbouring baronet. Still, let it not be supposed that Mr. Raby was a man of mere animal life, given to decry the value of literary attainments, averse to the fashionable refinements of that polished age, much less insensible to the common feelings of our nature. Far from it, no man indulged more in those sympathies which unite landlord and tenant, master and servant, in a bond of reciprocal kindness and good offices, nor more strictly performed the higher duties of his station. But his chief purpose was this:—he wished to be considered, as nearly as his nature would admit, a perfect specimen of the English country gentleman, whose head modern philosophy had not yet enlightened, at the expense of the best feelings of the heart; unsophisticated by foreign fopperies; a man whose character could face the world, and whose spirit would not fear it. Again, this maxim was often in his mouth: 'Wealth,' he would say, 'is not his who possesses it, but his who enjoys it'; and he acted up to the moral of it. '*Lætus aliis, sapiens sibi,*' he loved to see his friends enjoying themselves by his means; and, as regarded himself, his object was to gather the rose and leave the thorn behind.

Mr. Raby, however, being the father of my hero, I must now speak of him in the capacity of a sportsman; and a sportsman he was, although but to a certain extent. In the first place, he was not a fox-hunter, but confined himself to his harriers, which were quite perfect of their kind—indeed, the crack pack of all the neighbouring countries. And well might they be such, for the breed had been preserved and improved upon, for more than half a century, by his father and himself; and, from the number of walks he had for puppies amongst his own tenants, and those of his neighbours, he bred as many young hounds every year, to make a choice of, as some masters of foxhounds. Then his hunting establishment was perfect; and, as regarded horses, at least, not far from being equal to that necessary for foxhounds hunting only three days in the week. He kept ten slapping hunters for himself and his two men; and he never had less than forty couples of working hounds in his kennel. Nor must I pass over the manner in which his pack were turned out. As for themselves, they were, as I have already observed, perfect. There was not an inch between any one and another in height; their form was that of the modern foxhound in miniature; their tongues light, but musical, and their condition as perfect as their form. His huntsman was likewise a model of his order, having been the grandson of one man, and the son of another, who had filled the same situation in life; he was, therefore, well bred for his calling. He was, however, what is called 'a character,' a bundle of vagaries in his way. In the first place, although a horseman of the first class, he was difficult to be suited with horses; neither did he fancy any that he had not himself made choice of. And even here appeared the 'character.' He would take a fancy to animals by no means likely to make hunters, but which, as though instinct directed him in his election, seldom failed in turning out such. The mention of one of these animals, in fact, is now in the mouths of some old men in the parish, when speaking of Dick, the Squire's huntsman, and his lop-eared horse, which he purchased out of a neighbouring gentleman's coach-stable. Mounted on this horse, however, Dick was in his element; beautifully did he ride him to the music of his crack pack, and, did he espy among his field any gentleman whom he knew to have hunted in Leicestershire (he designated all such '*your silver-handled sportsmen*'), awful must have been the fence that turned him ten yards from his line, when his hounds were on a good scent.

Nor was Dick less notable on the field. He 'did the trick' in a style differing from his brother huntsmen of the *scut*, and, to manifest his superiority by quitting the beaten track, hunted his pack as if they had been foxhounds. He *tallyhoed* his hares when they were in view; hallooed his hounds forward, cap in hand, to a point; and, by forcing his game to fly beyond their knowledge of the country in which they were bred, had runs of extraordinary duration. In fact, such was the speed of these harriers, from the head they carried in chase, the result of the care taken in the breeding of them, that many first-rate hunters—ay, and hunters of fame too—have been blown to a dead stand-still, in the attempt to lie by the side of them in a burst, when the ground has been tender under their feet, and the scent good; and yet no man had more patience than Dick, when his hounds were brought down to their noses by the stain from cattle or sheep, or by a passing cloud or storm. Here he was the hare-hunter; and often has been the time when success has rewarded his patience, after that of his field had been exhausted. What did you do with your last hare? would be the question put to him many times during the season, by Mr. Raby, on his return home, he himself having left in a moment of despair. 'I *persevered*, sir, and killed her,' was the general reply.

Mr. Raby pursued one practice connected with his hunting, which might, with advantage, be more generally observed. He provided his huntsman with a book, in which were inserted the names of all the occupiers of land over which he sported, and he ordered that a hare should be given to each in his turn, and oftentimes twice, during the season.

But Mr. Raby was not a fox-hunter; for, in the first place, although an elegant horseman, and an excellent judge of the animal, he was not a strong-nerved man over a country. He was shy of timber and wide brooks, and, therefore, judiciously avoided entering into a pursuit in which he was aware he could not shine. Next, he was bred up a hare-hunter, and considered that the act of confining his attention to one sort of hunting would be the surest means of perpetuating the fame of his father's kennel, if not of increasing it. Thirdly, he had numerous duties to perform as a magistrate, and otherwise, exclusive of those of his own domestic station, which were less interrupted by the gentler pursuit of the hare; but when the foxhounds appeared in his neighbourhood, he would often see them find their fox, and they were nearly certain to do so in any of his own covers. Had a keeper of his levelled his gun at a fox, or designedly caught him in a trap, he would have been discharged on the morrow, as having committed a flagrant disobedience of orders.

Neither was Mr. Raby a racing man. To speak the truth, although quiet, even to diffidence, in his deportment, there was in his nature an ambition to excel in what he attempted. His estate was the best conditioned in his county; his harriers were, perhaps, the best of that day in England; his pointers and setting dogs—for he used the latter to the net—were perfect of their kind; and his breed of spaniels was sought after by every sportsman who had heard of it. But he was aware that, had he sought for it, excellence on the *turf* was out of his reach. Even the legitimate means of ensuring success, as the experience of many of his friends had convinced him, were doubtful; the illegitimate ones he would not have availed himself of, if presented to him.

There is one part of Mr. Raby's conduct as a sportsman of which notice should not, on any account, be omitted, inasmuch as it affords an example highly worthy of imitation by all whose means give them the power. I allude to the generous care he took of his worn-out hunters and coach-horses, in lieu of the too common practice of selling them for trifling sums, and exposing them to severe labour when least able to endure it. He had, after the manner of a master of foxhounds of the present day,[1] a range of pastures sacred to the repose of these pensioners on his bounty, in which they enjoyed themselves in perfect freedom from labour, and in full supply of all that old age requires. Each of the fields had a comfortable shed, to which they could resort, to protect themselves from cold in winter, as well as from the gad-fly in the summer, and in which, in the first-named season, was the well-furnished hay-crib, and, occasionally, still more nourishing food. Mr. Raby took a pleasure in exhibiting these pensioners to his friends. 'These animals have been all valuable servants to me,' he would say, on such occasions, 'and have strong claims upon my protection. That roan gelding, which has now scarcely a leg to support his body upon, carried me, with my hounds, thirteen seasons, and only, to my recollection, gave me five falls, two of which were not to be laid to his account. He was once as proud and prancing as he is now humble and decrepid, and, I fear, I shall soon be obliged to have an end put to his days, as a lesser evil of two. Yon milk-white horse—once a dark iron-grey, dragging his slow length along—was, in the days of his youth, for I bred him, such a roving, riotous fellow, that no hedge or gate could keep him within bounds, and it was a day's work to catch him. Then, when caught, he was no horse for me; but as I happened at that time to have a sort of dare-devil lad, as whipper-in, who valued him for his skittishness and impetuosity, he made him an excellent hunter. Now such was precisely the character of this lad himself, who, after rather a wild, but not vicious career, sobered down, like his colt, into an excellent servant, and lived with me, as a whipper-in, till his death, which was occasioned by a bad fall, but not from that horse. In fact, the horse and his rider appeared to reform themselves together. But the most extraordinary animal here is that strawberry-coloured mare, which you see reposing in the shade. She was purchased out of a hack-chaise, for the sum of twenty-five guineas, by my huntsman, who took a fancy to her; and, although, as you will perceive, showing no signs of high breeding, nor yet of much speed, she proved the best hunter, for the weight she had to carry, I have ever yet seen. It is evident that neither her sire nor her dam could have been of pure racing blood; but report says that the latter was brought into this county by some gipsies from the New Forest, in Hampshire, and hence her excellence is accounted for. She was, I am inclined to think, the produce of the celebrated Marske, the sire of Eclipse, who covered mares—New Forest ponies amongst them, of course—

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[1] The Viscount Kelburne.

at the low price of one guinea. In her best days, it was difficult to blow this mare in a burst; no fence that could be jumped by a horse could pound her; nor did I ever know her to come home to the stable tired, after the longest day's work. She is now, however, as you will perceive by her languid eye, her distended carcass, low back, and fallen crest, in extreme old age, the evils of which I have taken some pains to alleviate, in consideration of her fourteen years' services, and I rejoice in the reflection that a large offer did not induce me to part with her when in her prime.'

Having sketched the character of Mr. Raby, that of his lady shall follow, and a few words will suffice. It has already been said that Lady Charlotte Raby was an Earl's daughter. By uniting herself in marriage to a commoner, she had descended a step in society, according to the opinion of the world, although, in her own eyes her husband was ennobled beyond the power of a coronet to dignify him, by his conduct as a man and a husband. Neither did she look back with regret towards the theatre of her early life, in which her charms and accomplishments had met with universal admiration. She had enjoyed nearly seven years of what is called the fashionable London World, and that in all its glory; and she had had enough of it. She had become the wife of a country gentleman, and was the mother of four children; and she learnt, from the experience of the first seven years of so very different a life, this great moral truth: — that, although pleasure, amusement, and oblivion of self are to be found at the ball-room or at the opera, and although they occasionally hover around the stranger's hearth, still of all the sources of human happiness, domestic life is the richest and most productive; and had Lady Charlotte Raby read Horace, she would have exclaimed, with him, whilst reviewing her situation at Amstead Abbey, in the bosom of her own family, and surrounded by friends in whose esteem she lived, '*Quod petis hic est.*' In other words, she might have added this postscript to her answers to the letters of her London correspondents, who transmitted to her the doings of the gay world:—*What you look for elsewhere, I find here.*

There was, however, one feature in the amiable lady's character which I am unwilling not to exhibit to my readers. It too often happens that highly-bred women, who emerge from the vortex of the fashionable world to reside in the country with the husbands of their choice, look slightingly on the wives and daughters of the gentlemen in the neighbourhood who may not have had the *entrée* into similar walks of life (from which, indeed, their situation and circumstances excluded them), or are unable to exhibit so many quarterings in their escutcheons. This was not Lady Charlotte's failing. On the contrary, like a woman of good sense, she conformed to the situation which she had selected for herself in every respect; and although, within the circle of her visiting, there were several ladies holding rank nearly equal to her own, still there were no young ladies of her acquaintance oftener to be seen at the Abbey than the daughters of the rector of the parish.

The rector of Amstead was an old-fashioned country clergyman of whom John Bull was once wont to be so proud, and to whom obedience and tithes were paid without a murmur. Enabled, by the value of his preferment, the prudent management of his income, and a limited family—two daughters and one son—to make a most respectable appearance in society, and to add to the valuable instruction given by him to his congregation in the church, assistance to such as stood in need of it at their homes, he was extremely beloved in his parish. In fact, he was to the poor a 'Man of Ross'; and to his flock so much a pastor to their mind that dissent was unknown in his parish. And yet the rector was a sportsman—at least to a certain extent. He was an excellent shot, in cover especially, the woodcock being his favourite quarry. And here his turnout was somewhat remarkable, for he was always accompanied by his clerk, who was not only an excellent beater of a wood, but, having been the son of an Amstead gamekeeper, well knew the haunts of a cock, in all the covers of his neighbourhood. The clerk, however, like his rector, was much respected in his own village, where he was considered a man of no mean accomplishments, inasmuch as, exclusively of his sacred avocation, he was both a shoemaker and a schoolmaster, which induced a wag to indite this couplet over his door:—

John Wells' trades are three—
Cobbler, clerk, and *domine!*

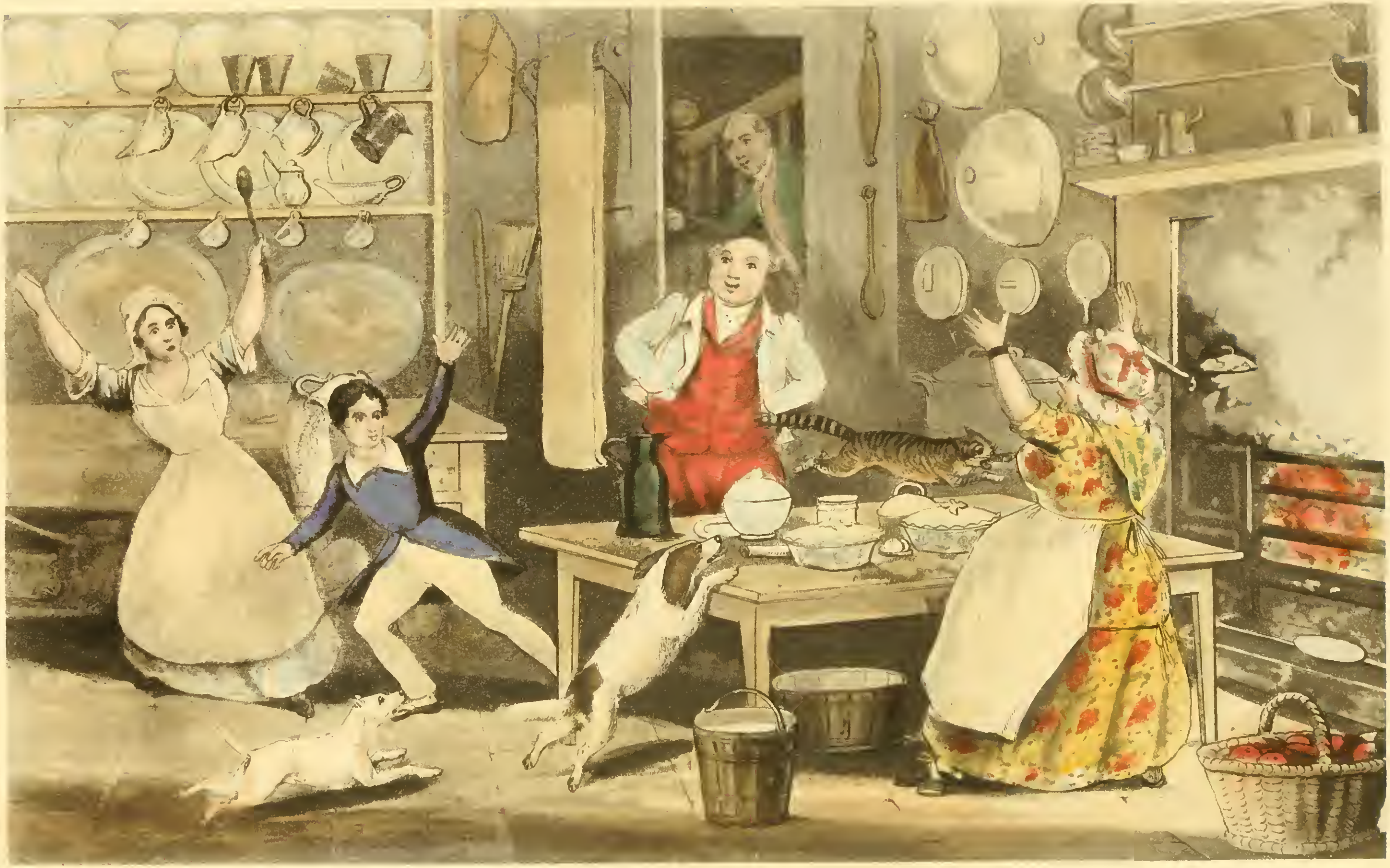
The mention of one more person is essential to the development of my tale—Mr. Beaumont Raby, brother to the Squire of Amstead, but of very different habits and pursuits. In the first place he was not a sportsman; and this for reasons independent of a natural disinclination for all sports of the field. His immense size would have been an obstacle to it, for he might have played Falstaff without stuffing. Again, his health was not good. He had incurred some of the penalties attendant on idleness and high feeding; but he equalled his brother in kindheartedness and good feeling, and exceeded him in accomplishments, the result of the life he had led. His history is this:—Having had an ample fortune left him when a child, by a person to whom he was but distantly related, he entered, with his brother, as a gentleman commoner of Christ Church, Oxford, where he took a very high degree. He then became a member of the Inner Temple, not with the view of making a profession of the law, but to qualify himself for a member of the senate, which it was his ambition to become. Nor was he disappointed. He sat in two short Parliaments, during which he made three speeches, each affording the promise of brighter days to come. They were not only occasionally adorned by classic flowers, culled from the poets and historians of the Augustan age, but they were also remarkable for clear views of their subjects, and a business-like manner of debating them. The natural indolence of his disposition, however, obtained the mastery over his inclinations; his seat in the house was not sought for a third time; he became a mere votary of ease and pleasure—in fact, what is called a regular London man; thinking with Sir Fopling Flutter, in the play, that 'all beyond Hyde Park Corner is a desert.' At all events, the simple and humble pleasures which a country life affords would have been to him something more than insipid. Nevertheless, the two brothers were greatly attached to each other; were inseparable when in London together; corresponded regularly when at a distance; and, perhaps once in three years, the ci-devant Templar and ex-member of the senate would quit the gay scenes of London and Bath to pass a few weeks at the Abbey.

It has already been stated that the family of Mr. Raby consisted of four—two sons and two daughters—all of whom lived to attain their majority: Francis, the second son, however, is the hero of this story, and here his history begins:—

He was born in the year 1776, and being the issue of sound and healthy parents, and a perfect and well-shapen infant, soon struggled into what may be called life; that is to say, the 'mewling and puking in the nurse's arms' was, in due time, succeeded by a strong desire to get upon his legs and amuse himself. In fact, although to declare the end from the beginning is not within the scope of human power, there was something about this boy, at the end of his third year, which indicated that, one day or another, in one pursuit or other, he was likely to overtop the crowd. It is true the human mind is made for action; but this child was as active and restless as the hyæna, and showed a desire to pry into everything within his reach; and the predominance of his taste was not long in displaying itself. If he found a stick, he wanted a string to tie to the end of it; and if he found a string, he wanted a stick to tie the string to. In fact, a whip was his delight, but the sight of a horse transported him; and from morning to night did his little tongue ring the changes of horse and whip, whip and horse, varied only by an occasional notice of a favourite dog, that was allowed to make its domicile in the nursery. In short, as the dawn of morning generally shows the day, it was evident that Francis Raby was to be a sportsman.

As may be imagined from their situation in life, Francis Raby and his brother (who was named after his father) had every care taken of them in their infancy; and, before they were eight years of age, their characters were pretty clearly developed. But as 'one star differeth from another in glory,' so did the characters of these brothers vary in a very unusual degree. Andrew was always in the house, and with his mother when he could be; Francis out of doors, and about the stables as soon as he could break loose and steal away. Andrew delighted in a book; Francis appeared to have an antipathy to one. Andrew was pale and sickly, and subject to infantine diseases; Francis was a miniature waggoner in frame and constitution. In one respect, however, they assimilated. Both showed indications of talent, and, in their exercises with their tutor, who prepared them for Eton, 'the promise of a goodly day to-morrow.'

There is nothing more certain than that all things must have a beginning; and what may be called the sporting career of Francis Raby commenced about his tenth year, when he became

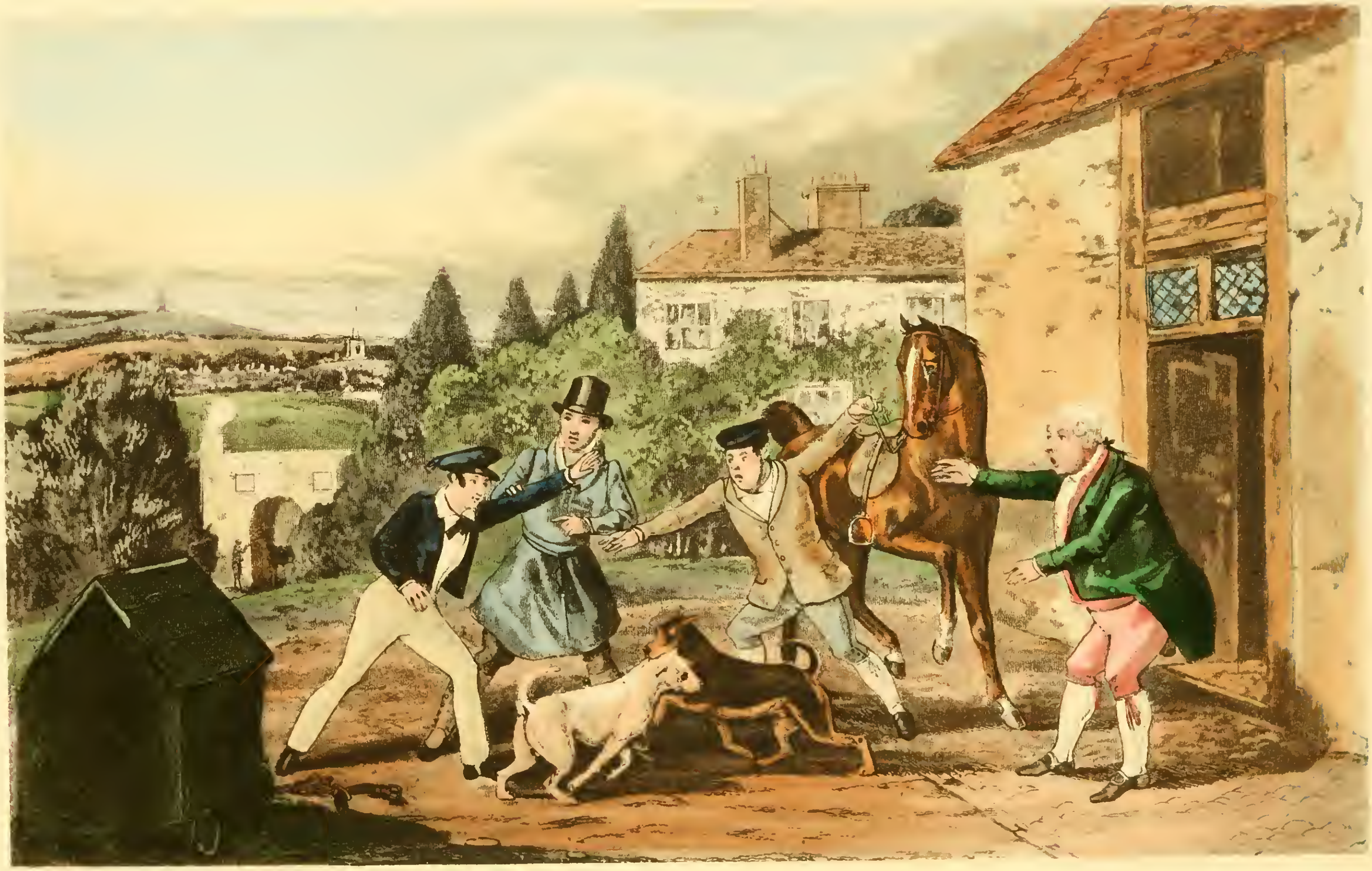


"Yoicks! Tally-ho! Look out for the pastry."

possessed of a couple of terriers, of a good game breed, sore enemies not only to the rats about the buildings, but to all the cats of the house, which were hunted by them about once a week. On one occasion, however, Master Francis had almost driven the jest too far; for, having chased one of them into the kitchen, with his terriers close at her tail, she leapt on the table and upset a tureen of turtle soup, that was on the point of being served up to a dinner-party. Frank, however—for such he was always called, as most Francises are—got well out of the scrape by his great popularity among the servants, who either took the mishap upon themselves, or laid it to that scapegoat in all families—the cat. Frank and his terriers, however, were much dreaded in the neighbourhood by all who had favourite tabbies, as a gripe from either Pincher or Vixen was very apt to prove fatal. But, did Mr. Raby know of this cat-killing propensity? and, if so, did he encourage it? The general character of that gentleman leads to the conclusion that he would not have encouraged, in his children, cruelty to animals, a vice the very reverse of the characteristic of the thorough English sportsman. Nevertheless he was well aware of this truism—that to restrain the pleasures and pursuits of youth with too tight a hand, is as preposterous as to be angry with the spring of the year because it produces nothing but blossoms, or to expect from that early season the fruits of autumn in their perfection; and it must be admitted that, when he saw his favourite son, Frank—for most fathers have favourites—with a couple of terriers at his heels, and his ferret bag in his hand, he was delighted beyond measure. 'That boy,' he would say, 'will be a sportsman, and one day or another will see him at the top of the tree, if he lives.' And he had a right so to predict of him. No matter whether pleasure or business be the object, whoever pursues either to any purpose, must do so *con amore*, which was truly Frank's case. No sooner did his tutor dismiss him, than he was at war with one description of vermin or another; and he was wonderfully expert in his calling.

As similarity of taste inspires regard, Frank, as he progressed in years, formed a strong alliance with one of the head keeper's sons, who, as his father had initiated him into the entrapping art, was of no small service in his pursuits; and such was their success in ferreting rabbits, that they furnished the supply for the house, of which they were not a little proud, as there was no great abundance of them on the estate—Mr. Raby being averse to their increase, on account of the injury done by them to young trees. To a certain extent, however, he wished to preserve them, as the means of ensuring litters of foxes in his covers. Still, as it may be supposed, this intimate alliance with Jem Perren, the young keeper, was not without its effect on the aspiring mind of his young master. From the superiority of Jem's knowledge in these matters, as well as having the advantage in years, Frank looked up to him as his chief preceptor—his reverence the tutor only being second. Then, again, Jem was an accomplished youth of his kind. In the first place, Nature had not been unkind to him; he inherited a great share of his father's acuteness, and, for his years, more than his share of his Herculean frame and strength. In fact, he was quite the 'cock of the walk' among all the lads of the village in which he had received his *learning*, and had often amused his young master with accounts of the various battles he had been engaged in, at least those which had ended in victory.

As may be supposed, all this was not lost on our hero, who listened to such tales with delight; neither can we marvel at his having done so. He was now in his thirteenth year, and had been reading history with his tutor, as well as listening to his brother when reading it, in portions considered beyond his own reach at the time; and had paid particular attention to the accounts given of those heroes of antiquity who had signalised themselves in gymnastic exercises, boxers and wrestlers especially. He found that the first kings of the world obtained their dominion by being superior to all others in strength and courage—in fact, that, even in Homer's time, the *argumentum baculinum* was essential to the existence of all little governments. Leaving out of the question those apocryphal heroes, Hercules, Theseus, Pollux, and others, who were feigned to have been the original inventors of games and combats (considered so admirably calculated for rendering the bodies of youth robust and vigorous, and capable of supporting the severe fatigue of a soldier's life, that they were wisely made to form a part of their religious worship), he had read that the most celebrated characters of their day excelled in the boxing and wrestling arts. Epaminondas, for example,



"Never mind 'em—they won't hurt."

[illegible]

one of the greatest generals and most perfect characters that Greece ever produced, was a patron of, as well as conspicuous in, all such exercises; and it is gravely stated in history that a knowledge of the art of wrestling gave to the Thebans under his command the battle of Leuctra, and decided the fate of Sparta. Having read of all this, his wonder ceased at finding that master of the wrestling art, Hippomachus, declare that he could discover his scholars at a distance, though they were only carrying meat from the shambles; or that crowns of olive should have been bestowed by the Eleans on boys of his own age, who had excelled in gymnastic exploits. Nor was the art of boxing exhibited to his young, but aspiring mind, in less glowing colours. He found not only that Milo, one of the athletæ of his day, could knock down a bull by a blow of his arm, but, by the example of Dares, that the science of self-defence, as the modern term is, was not beneath the notice of a prince. So far from it, indeed, that, among the Greek and Roman nobility and gentry, scarcely a day, he found, passed without their practising bodily exercises in the gymnasium—the use of the cæstus among the number; and, to his surprise, he learned that even the love of gladiatorial shows amongst the Romans increased as they progressed in civilisation, and their manners became more refined; and that such exhibitions flourished during the reigns of two of their most humane emperors, Trajan and Titus. Then, again, he had listened to his father while discussing the subject with his friends, in reference to the doings of those days when Broughton, Slack, Humphries, Mendoza, Big Ben, and others, all famous men in the ring, were in their zenith. Mr. Raby, however, was no patron of pugilism. His duties as a magistrate forbade it; still, as conducted in those days, he was rather favourably inclined towards it than otherwise. At all events, he would occasionally deliver his sentiments on the subject somewhat after this manner:—'I am doubtful,' he would say, 'as to the effect of conflicts between animals, on the courage of the people; at the same time I question whether the extraordinary courage of the game-cock was not intended as an example to us. One of the greatest orators of our day thinks it was; and in defence of the hypothesis, instances the *pluck* and *bottom* of Englishmen, who chiefly encourage these combats, and conduct them after the most scientific manner. Our boxing matches, or prize-fights, as they are now called, are contests of the same kind as the fights of the gladiators, only upon a lower scale; with this difference, that no man—unless he chooses—is opposed to unequal force; and if we could divest the mind of the fact that the contest is not so much for glory as for money, such has been the display of manly intrepidity, firmness, gallantry, activity, presence of mind, and strength, which some of our late prize-fights have called forth, that no man need be ashamed of having viewed them with interest. At all events, suppress boxing wholly, and there will be an end to that sense of honour, spirit, and gallantry which distinguishes the common people of this country from those of all others, and they will resort to practices, and the use of weapons in their quarrels, which they now scarcely think of; and which are cowardly and disgraceful, because they are commonly resorted to in the dark, or when the object of vengeance is off his guard. They would decide their quarrels with knives instead of fists, and the life of no man, in the lower ranks of society, who had given much cause of offence, could be said to be safe. In fact, a great lawyer has pronounced the laws of boxing to be the laws of peace, "teaching that no unfair advantage shall be taken by either of the combatants, and putting a stop to a malignant mode of procuring satisfaction. They inculcate a love of fair play, and foster the natural courage of our countrymen, whilst they create a disgust in their minds for the treacherous use of the stiletto or knife."

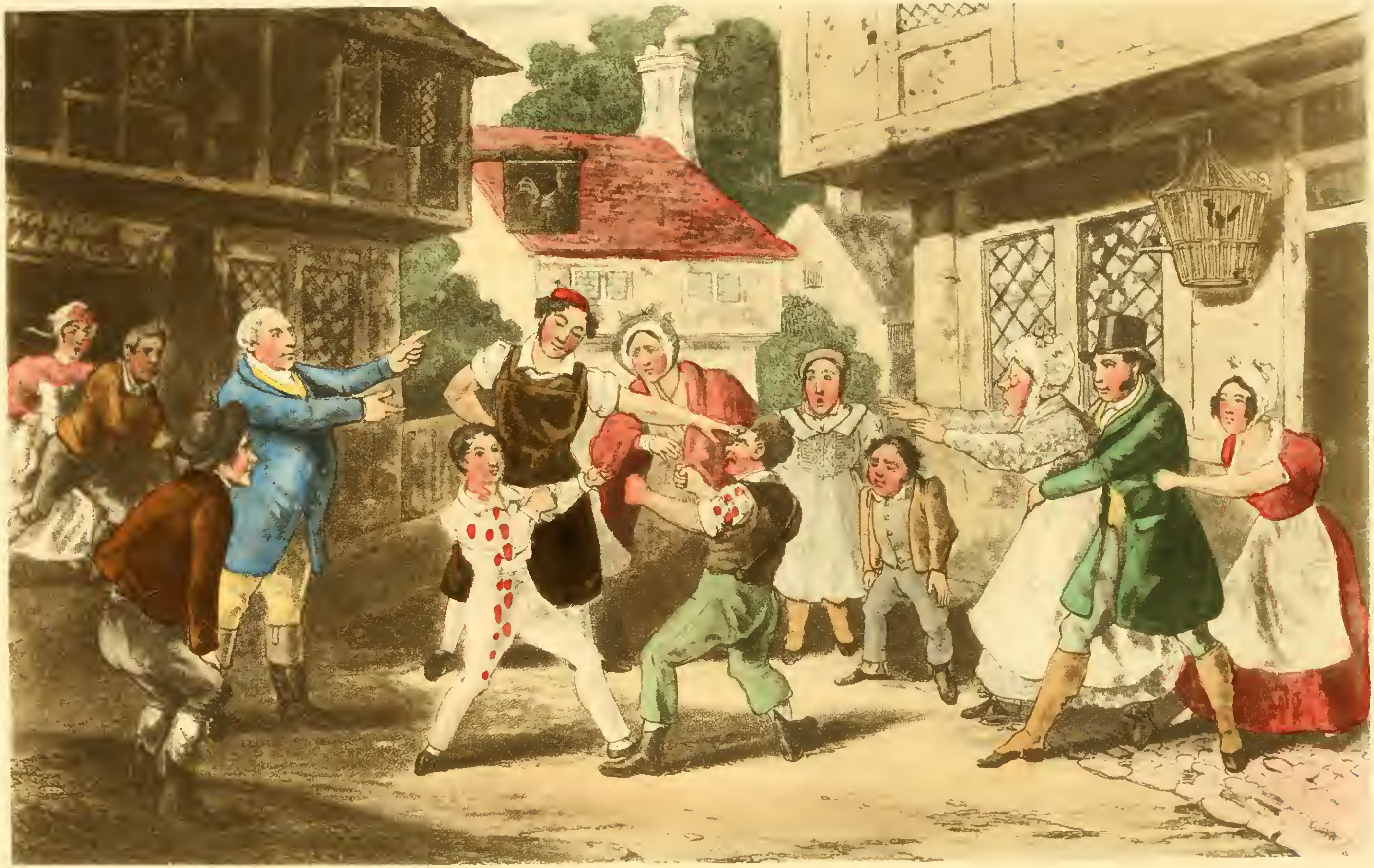
'Still,' Mr. Raby would say, 'it is not impossible that the system of prize-fighting, which Broughton calls "a truly British art," may become the reproach, rather than the characteristic of our countrymen. The persons who take up the profession of public prize-fighters are of nearly the lowest grade in society, and are too often unable to resist a bribe to induce them to do wrong—that is, to sell their battles for money—although there are, and have been, many honourable exceptions. They partake, indeed,' he would say, 'of some of the obloquy that attached to the Roman gladiators, humorously set forth in a Greek epigram on a bad tenant, from the pen of Palladius, which has been thus translated:—

'"I let my house, the other day,
To one who dealt in corn and hay:

Next morning I found, ah! woe is me,
A dreadful pugilist is he.
When will you pay my rent? quoth I;
He lifts his fist and cocks his eye.
I then to Pollux made my vow,
Although on peace my thoughts were now,
That I, before next quarter day,
Might learn to box, or run away.'"

It was not to be expected that much science in the art of self-defence was to be found in a gamekeeper's lad; still many 'turns-up' with those who were bigger and older than himself had imparted to Jem Perren a tolerable notion of taking some care of himself; and he boasted of no less than three favourite stops, and likewise of one very telling blow. These were, of course, imparted to our hero, who would often be seen taking lessons from his green-jacketed preceptor; and truly he was soon a proficient. He could not only hit very hard, in which his weight told to his advantage, but he could stop, and get away, in a manner surprising for his age. Hence arose one of the disadvantages of a slight knowledge of the pugilistic art, combined with the power and inclination to put it into practice. It created in Frank Raby a domineering spirit, which, notwithstanding his good sense, and many excellent qualities, adhered to him, in some measure, through life. Although his brother was his senior by nearly two years he treated him as his junior, and, by the weight of his fist, established his claim of precedence. No boys in the neighbouring villages dared to cross his path in his pursuits, provided they were near his own age, for his name was up. On one occasion, however, he signalised himself beyond the expectation of his admiring friends; and, from his extreme good-nature, and kind disposition towards the necessitous poor, he had many such in the neighbourhood in which he was known. Passing through a village, in one of his roving walks, he espied one of those half-baked, half-nursed ragamuffins, a specimen of whom about one parish in every six affords, unmercifully beating a defenceless orphan not much more than half his own size. The chivalrous spirit of our hero would not brook this; so, throwing down his hat, he gave him 'a chattering facer,' the term, as his preceptor Jem informed him, for a heavy thump on the mouth, and instantly put himself 'into attitude.' Ragamuffin did the same, when a smart round ensued, rather in his favour; but the young one was nowise daunted. The old blood of the Rabys warmed in his young veins at every blow, and he said to himself, 'I'll lick this snob, or die.' Presently the whole village became alarmed for the safety of Master Francis. Out ran the apothecary from his house, and the mother of one of the Amstead housemaids from hers, both insisting on some of the lookers-on interfering, and putting an end to the fight. It happened, however, that the coachman had walked down to the village with his young master, and he stoutly asserted that Master Francis was 'all right. He'll leather two such chaps as that,' said coachey, 'and I'll go and see fair play.' The result was thus:—In the fifth round, the young one hit his opponent such a smasher in his teeth, that he turned cur and ran off, amidst the hootings of all present; thus verifying the maxim, that 'thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just.' Even the magpie in the cage chattered, as if exulting to see justice so summarily obtained for a poor orphan lad.

'Come into my house, Master Francis,' said the doctor, 'that I may see what injury you have sustained. Here is a blow over the left eye to begin with, and it will be black in a few hours; what will your mamma say?' 'Oh!' said the coachman, 'he can tell my lady that Rodney (the pony) threw up his head, and struck him on the face; she won't know no better.' 'But your thumb, Master Francis, you have cut it rather deep, by a blow against one of the young rascal's teeth,' resumed the doctor. 'Oh!' observed coachey, 'that will be soon settled; he can tell my lady he took a shot at a rook out of Jem Perren's gun, and that it was too high loaded, and hit him a hard blow on his hand. Besides, from what I know of my lady, dash me if I don't think she'd like to know how young master served out that cowardly scoundrel, for she once stopped the carriage on purpose to give the poor orphan he had been beating a shilling, and she has twice had him clothed. You know, doctor, his father worked in her flower-garden.' 'But the tutor, Master Francis?' continued Esculapius. 'Oh, bother the tutor!' replied the coachman; 'they tells me he is a great scholard, but he's as soft as a pat of butter; Master Francis can soon gammon *him*, as he has often done before. And as to master, I know what he will



"He'll leather two such chaps as that!"

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say: "Never let a horse hit you in your face with his head, Frank; it is a symptom of bad horsemanship. When a horse plunges, or rears, always keep your head and person a little inclined to the left side of him, and then, should he lose his balance, and fall backward, you slip off before he comes to the ground." I heard him say those very words to Master Raby the other day.' Here the coachman and his young master took their departure homeward, the former repeating his lesson, and assuring Frank, at the same time, that if he would come into the servants' hall before he went to bed, he would clap a raw beef-steak to his face, as the fighting-men do, which would take out all the blackness by the morrow.

The hour of dessert having arrived, in walked Master Francis with his brother and two sisters, looking as demure as a saint. 'What have you done to your face, my dear?' inquired Lady Charlotte; 'it is much swollen above your left eye.' 'Rodney threw up his head with me this morning, mamma, and struck me in the face,' was his reply.' 'Oh, Frank!' said Mr. Raby, 'how could you let him do that? A good horseman never suffers from such an accident. Should his horse begin to play tricks, he always keeps his own head inclined towards the left, and then he cannot be struck as you have been. I have known instances of persons having nearly every tooth knocked out by blows from horses' heads.' Frank said nothing, but refused to eat an orange, until twice asked to do so. As he was peeling it, the wound on his hand appeared. 'Why, Frank,' exclaimed Lady Charlotte, 'you have been in perils to-day; did Rodney throw you?' 'No, mamma,' he replied, 'I was taking a shot at a rook out of Jem's gun, and it was loaded so high that it struck me on my hand. But it will soon be well, and coachman says if I come to him before I go to bed to-night, he will do for me what the boxers do—clap a raw beef-steak under my night-cap, and I shall have no black eye to-morrow.' 'Nasty fellow!' exclaimed Lady Charlotte; 'I insist upon it, he does no such thing. What could put it into the man's head to doctor my children?' Frank was again silent, when he was at length addressed by the tutor, in rather a grave tone. 'If you had remained at home this morning, Frank, and done what I wished you—translated that chapter in Aurelius, *De viris illustribus*, and finished your exercise on the battle of Pharsalia, you would not have met with these disasters, but would have been able to have taken the field with the harriers to-morrow, whereas you will now be obliged to remain at home, as I fear not even the raw beef-steak would have prevented your having a black eye, in which case you could not, of course, appear abroad.' At the mention of the word *battle*, the blood rushed to Frank's face, conceiving that the 'murder was out'; but such was not the case. Contrary to expectation, the doctor did not *blab*, and the event of the fight never reached beyond the walls of the servants' hall of the Abbey, although it was widely spread among the surrounding villagers, who were loud in their praises of the young *Dares*.

Mr. Egerton, the tutor, was one of those old-fashioned clergymen of the Church of England, once so highly looked up to by the people, but now supplanted, in too many instances, by a new-fashioned sort, who, by preaching for an hour or more on subjects which their hearers do not understand, and too often creating doubts which they cannot themselves remove, drive thousands from their churches to seek for instruction elsewhere.

He was old-fashioned enough to consider the true philosophy of life, as well as the duty of his profession, to consist in endeavouring to assuage the evils of human nature by any means, provided they war not against the soul. Fanaticism, with its long train of gloomy terrors, he left to those who practised it, and was inclined even to think, with Lord Shaftesbury, that gravity is too often but another word for imposture. He considered that we are entitled to enjoy the good things of this life when honestly procured, and that it were the height of ingratitude not to taste with satisfaction the liberal bounty of Providence. All he insisted upon was—that when our wishes are gratified, and the cup of fortune full, we should not drink it to the dregs.

Having said this, it is almost needless to add, that Mr. Egerton entered fully into the pleasures and amusements of Amstead Abbey, to the society of which, by his many agreeable accomplishments, he was no small acquisition. There was, however, one species of amusement in which he did not often participate; he rarely hunted, not that he thought it unbecoming his clerical situation, but because he was so bad a horseman that he feared he might break his neck. Neither was he ever seen with a gun in his hand, the reason for which was a ludicrous one. On being asked by a visitor to Mr. Raby, why he did not join the shooting party of that morning, he accounted for it in the following words:—'I was once,' said he, 'inclined to the sport of the gun, but a circumstance that had nearly been attended with consequences which would have rendered me miserable for life, determined me to abandon it. My sight is imperfect; that is to say, I am, what is called, near-sighted; and being once in a wood with my gun, I espied what I took to be a fine full-grown black rabbit, under a furze-bush. I fired at, and, thank God, missed it, for it proved to be the head of the most intimate friend of my youth, who had laid himself at full length on the ground, to enable him to get a shot at a hare. The shock to my nerves was so great, that, to this day, the report of a gun brings instantly to my mind the head of my friend under the furze-bush.'

Although no sportsman, as far as horses and guns were concerned, Mr. Egerton had other ways of amusing himself abroad. He was an excellent fisherman, considering the disciple of the angle, probably, as pursuing an apostolical recreation, which, I believe, Izaak Walton did before him. He was, also, a musician, playing beautifully on the violoncello and the flute. But the *summum bonum*, in the way of indoor amusement, was a rubber at whist, at which he was truly a *trump*. In fact, whoever got the parson for a partner, considered him worth one point in the game, and half a crown would now and then be ventured on the rubber, on the strength of his fine play. But notwithstanding these recreations, in which Mr. Egerton freely indulged himself, at proper times and seasons, no man could have performed his two-fold duties more sedulously than he discharged his. In the preparation of his two pupils for Eton, he succeeded eminently, and in his calling, as curate of the parish, he gave universal satisfaction both in and out of church.

CHAPTER II

The first great step in the life of our 'Sportsman': he is entered to hare—The Chapter concludes with many choice Aphorisms concerning the Noble Science, and sundry anecdotes, worthy being recorded in letters of gold.

'What is to be done to-morrow,' said Mr. Egerton to his pupils in the evening, 'as Lady Charlotte has asked for a holiday?' '*I* shall *hunt*,' exclaimed our hero, his eyes brightening with delight; and he was out of the room, to give orders for Rodney to have no water in the morning, before his brother had returned an answer to the question. '*I* shall walk to the rectory,' said Andrew; 'I promised the Miss Chapmans I would bring them the books my uncle sent me last week from London, and they are very anxious to read them.' 'There is no disputing about tastes,' observed the tutor, addressing our young sportsman, on his return to the drawing-room, and hinting that he should not let Rodney give him another black eye, as nothing had so ungentlemanlike an appearance. 'Besides,' continued he, 'it savours of awkward horsemanship, in which, as you seem bent on being a fox-hunter, some day or another, you ought to endeavour to excel. Indeed, all gentlemen should ride well; and you will remember my telling you that, in the letters of Lord Chesterfield to his son, and of Lord Chatham to his nephew, it is insisted upon, as part of their education, to enable them to make a good appearance in the world, as Horace had insisted before them, in his advice to youth. You also remember my drawing your notice to several passages in history, in which the accomplishment of riding well is either pointed out, or boasted of, by still greater men. Hannibal, for example, is said to have differed in nothing in his appearance from the ordinary men of his day, unless in the peculiar neatness and elegance of his horses and their furniture, and likewise his seat in the saddle; and it was only yesterday that your brother was reading of Cicero, who, addressing his son Marcus, told him that, as the eyes of the world would be upon him, on account of his father's fame, he was delighted to hear that he had received the praise of all the army for his excellence in riding.'

'I hunt with you to-morrow, papa,' said Frank to his father, as soon as he had made his escape from what he called 'Egerton's botheration about Hannibal and Cicero.' 'I hope we shall find as good a buck hare as that which Mr. Gibbon's shepherd soho'd for us the last time we met at the same place.' 'Frank,' said Mr. Raby, 'I must now be your tutor, and, in this instance, can do more for you than Mr. Egerton. You have made use of two terms not used in hare-hunting, and it becomes every person to adapt their language to their subject. A male hare, in hunting, is called a jack hare; and the word *tan-ta-ra*, not *soho*, denotes one espied in its form. The terms you have applied are peculiar to coursing.'

About a mile from the place of meeting Frank overtakes the hounds, and the following interesting colloquy occurs:—

Huntsman (touching his cap).—'Good morning, Master Francis; glad to see you out, sir. Rodney looks in high feather; you'll beat us all to-day.'

Frank.—'No, Dick; there is no beating you on old Clodhopper, with his ugly lop ears. How you set them all the last time, over the Barnsly brook!'

Dick (smiling).—'Well, sir; but you saw a good deal of the run; now can you give us any account of it? for I sadly want to make *you* a sportsman. As for Master Raby, it's no use thinking of him: he's so terribly fond of books, flowers, pictures, and such like trumpery that he takes no delight in field sports. Then, again, that tutor does him no good, making him believe that he is to be a great scholard and a parliament man at last. For my part, I don't like those parliament gentlemen. I lived with one once; and just as the best part of the hunting began—about a month after Christmas, when we had such large fields that I sometimes got a hat full of half-crowns after a good run—away he went to parliament, and away went half my field as well.'

Frank.—'I had rather be a master of foxhounds, than member for the county, Dick—would not you? And, Dick, why does not papa keep foxhounds instead of the harriers? They tell me that six more horses, and a few more couples of hounds than he now has, would do; and I am sure you could hunt fox as well as you do hare.'

Dick.—'Your papa will never keep foxhounds, sir. He is the best master of harriers this day in England, but don't take delight in fox-hunting. Then, again, sir, you are wrong about thinking I could hunt fox as well as I do hare. When you turns fox-hunter, which no doubt you will do when you gets to the University, you'll see there is a great difference in the systems pursued with foxhounds and harriers; and that which is good in one, is bad in another, although not to the extent that some people thinks. I happened to overhear one of our gentlemen telling how Dick Knight lost his fox the other day with the Pytchley hounds—"at least," said he, "so thought Mr. Alcock." "Mr. Alcock," said one of them, "what does that old *thistle-whipper* know about hunting?" Now that is going too far; for, in my opinion, an old thistle-whipper must know a great deal more of hunting than a young fox-hunter is likely to do. But, Master Francis, can you give me any account of the last run you saw, in which there was a good deal to notice?'

Frank.—'Why, you know, Dick, I was behind a bit at starting, because I could not go fast enough the first ten minutes; but I said to myself, I shouldn't wonder if they come to a check at that large flock of sheep on the turnips, which they did, and I then got up to you. But I think I should have been with you all the way had it not been for that nasty oak stile, which my father would not let me ride at, and took me out of the line to a gate. I am certain Rodney would have cleared it, for I rode him over a higher than that, one day, after you, on Carpenter, when papa was not out—but I was deuced nearly off, Dick.'

Dick.—'Don't ride at timber, Master Francis—you are too young for that yet; and, if you get a *squeezer* at it, it may daunt you. I have had some terrible falls over timber, and was twice picked up for dead.'

Frank.—'But about the run! I saw how you hit off your hare, when the hounds were checked by the sheep. You stood stock-still whilst the hounds made their cast; but finding that neither Bellman, Bounty, nor Tyrant give tongue, and that some of the others had their noses off the ground, you gave a blast with your horn, made something like a circle in a trot, when old Bounty hit off the scent, and we went on.'

Dick.—'It was Bellman, Master Francis; but the brother and sister are so alike, that I scarcely know one from t'other myself. That is not a bad hit of yours, however, sir. *You'll do in time.*'

Frank.—'But, Dick, what a head they carried over Groseby field. As the leaps were not too much for Rodney, I was pretty near you—was I not, Will? (addressing himself to the whipper-in). And I saw that young bitch, Melody, that papa is so fond of, guiding the scent for at least half a mile. He declares he would not take ten pounds for her.'

Dick.—'I would not take half that sum for her myself, sir. She is by the old Duke of Grafton's Tyrant, out of our old Melody, and has all the good qualities of a foxhound with those of the harrier. But, Master Francis, who told you about a hound "guiding the *scent*"? It's a monstrous good notion, but we always say "guiding the *pack*."'

Frank.—'It is what Mr. Egerton calls a "figure of speech," Dick.'

Dick.—'Ah! sir, see what it is not to have a larning! I shall never talk again about a hound guiding the pack, as I am all for a bit of novelty in my trade when I can get it. And I see no reason why hare-hunting should remain where my grandfather left it, when, as Squire Talbot says, the hares never went out of their own parishes.'

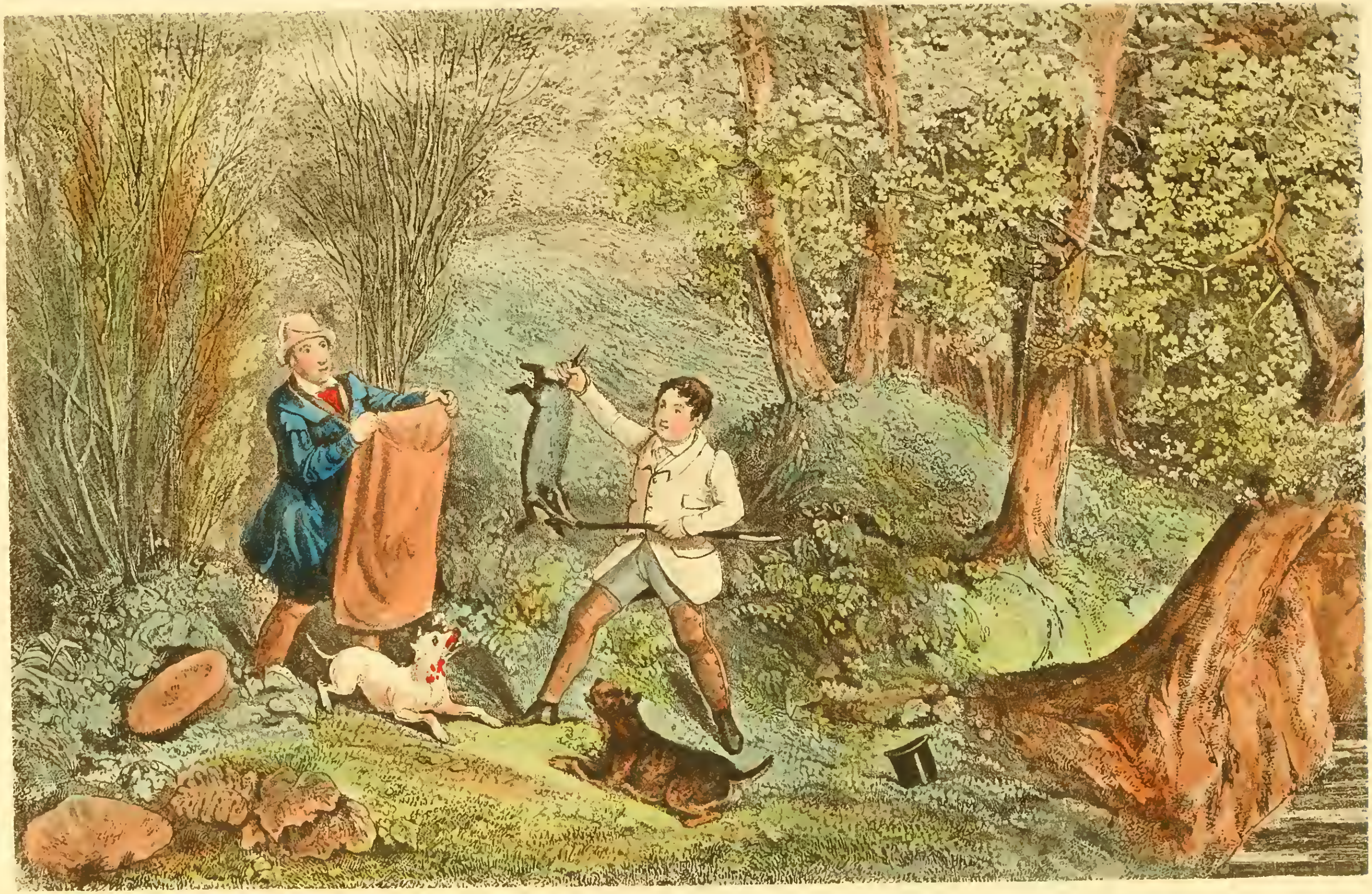
Frank.—'Mr. Egerton says there has been a great deal written about hunting hares, which I shall know when I come to read Greek. One Xenophon, he says, wrote about it more than two thousand years ago; and another Greek writer, called Homer, compared hounds running a hare through thick woods, to two great warriors pursuing an enemy by night.'

Dick.—'I don't doubt it, sir. That Mr. Egerton is a clever gentleman; I wish he would come a-hunting, as, perhaps, he might write something about it, for I don't know of any one having done so since the gentlemen you have just mentioned, and it is but a few that could read what they have said.'

Our hero was on the point of joining with the huntsman in the wish that his tutor would take the field, when Mr. Raby and the rest of the party came up, and orders were given to draw for a hare, in a fallow adjoining the road, which having been long ploughed, was considered likely to produce one. It did so; a brilliant burst was the result; and, at the end of thirty-two minutes, Dick had her in his hand, as stiff as if she had been six years in a museum. Another run followed, in which some fine hunting was displayed; and Mr. Raby and his friends returned to the Abbey, well satisfied with their sport, and with a good appetite for their dinner.

During the interval between the two runs, which was not a very short one—for hares were not abundant in those days—Frank was seen in earnest conversation with a well-mounted gentleman, a stranger to Mr. Raby and his friends, who attracted every one's notice by the masterly manner in which he rode, and the attention he paid to the hunting of this celebrated pack of harriers. 'I have hunted in all our best counties,' said he to his friend, and this in the hearing of our young sportsman, 'and chiefly in the crack county of all—in Leicestershire; but I never saw more beautiful hunting than these hounds have this day shown. I have not only admired them when in difficulties, in which I must say they were ably assisted by their huntsman, but the head they carried in chase surprised me; surely Mr. Raby must breed a great number of hounds, to be able to top and tail them to their present perfection; for there does not appear to be half an inch of difference in their height, nor more than a yard or two in speed. Then what beautifully formed animals they are, and how light yet musical are their tongues: in fact, how unlike the heavy, throaty, long-eared, bow-wowing brutes that I have seen in other countries. I really think that if I lived near them,—devoted as I have been all my life to foxhounds, and prone to despise harriers,—I should hunt with them at least once a week.'

These were honeyed words to the ears of Frank Raby, who repeated them with much delight to his father on their road home; and it was also in his power to inform him where this *lion*, in his eyes, was domiciled, which happened to be at the mansion of an intimate, but non-hunting friend. 'Ah!' said Mr. Raby on the last-named circumstance being made known to him, 'then we shall see him at the Abbey on Saturday, if he remains so long on his visit to Sir William, as the baronet and his party dine with us on that day.' 'Oh! papa,' observed Frank, 'how glad I am to know that! we shall hear all about Leicestershire hunting, which is the best in all the world, I believe: but will you promise not to begin upon it with him until we come in to dessert?' Mr. Raby smiled, and said nothing; but doubtless his heart responded to the call of his favourite son.



Bagging the badger.

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One of the leading characteristics of a young sportsman is the pursuit of all animals which come under the denomination of vermin; and, indeed, for the preservation of game, poultry, and many other things, the destruction of them, as of many of the feathered race, is necessary. There is, however, one animal included in this list, which, as far as the evils of his ways are taken into account, is entitled to an exemption, for they are few, if any. This animal is the badger, neither a depredator nor a thief; but subsisting chiefly on pig nuts, beech mast, and roots; in fact, on anything that pigs eat in the woods; and, moreover, of service to the sportsman, by drawing earths for foxes, although he sometimes, by making them too strong, increases the expense of stopping. The badger, however, possesses two very extraordinary properties —the prodigious strength of his nose in burrowing, and the ferocity with which he defends himself when attacked by dogs. Drawing badgers from their burrows is one test of courage, or pluck, in terriers, and dogs of that description, for which purpose many are kept, to the discredit of those who keep them.

'What have you been doing to-day, Francis?' inquired Mr. Egerton, on the morrow after the hare-hunt. 'I saw you coming to the house with Jem Perren, who was carrying something in a bag.' 'We had been drawing a badger, sir, in the big wood, and you would have been pleased to see how well Pickle and Vixen behaved.' 'Indeed,' replied Mr. Egerton, 'I should not. It would have afforded me no pleasure to have seen animals tormenting each other for your pleasure, and merely that you might get possession of a worthless, though harmless creature.' 'Not worthless, sir,' resumed Frank; 'we mean to have a burrow made for him to enter the young terriers at him, for Jem Perren thinks those out of Trinket are not thorough-bred by the father's side.' 'Indeed, Francis,' exclaimed the tutor, 'you shall do no such thing; at least with my knowledge. You have signalised yourself, in your own estimation, by having drawn a wild badger from his burrow, which, no doubt, you think much of; but let once doing so suffice. I shall walk with you to-morrow to the big wood, and see you replace the poor animal in his burrow.'

In the hilarity of youthful spirits, this interference had no further effect on our young sportsman than to damp his ardour, for the moment, in a pursuit in which he had just commenced with such success, and he walked away with a somewhat sullen step, to communicate the sad tidings to Jem Perren. 'Bless me,' said Jem; 'I wish that parson was in the place he talks so much about in church; he'll be the ruin of you, Master Francis. I heard my father say, the other day, that he scolded him for shooting jays, although the gardener says they play the deuce with the raspberries and cherries, and you know my father wants the feathers for fly-fishing.' 'Ay,' resumed Frank; 'but never mind, Jem; we go to Eton after midsummer, and then we can get rid of his botheration, and shall be our own masters in the holidays.'

Saturday arrived: and the family at the Grange came to the Abbey to dinner, and, with them, the 'lion' out of Leicestershire, whose name was Somerby, from whose conversation with his father Frank Raby anticipated a great treat. Neither was it short of a treat to the father himself, to contribute to the delight of his favourite son, and, according to promise, he waited his coming to dessert before the subject of hunting in Leicestershire commenced. We will give it in detail.

Mr. Raby.—'Were I a fox-hunter, Mr. Somerby, I should envy you who make Leicestershire your domicile.'

Mr. Somerby.—'It is, without doubt, the county of all others in which a man may get the most hunting.'

Mr. Raby.—'And the best.'

Mr. Somerby.—'That depends on circumstances. It is a mistaken notion that a good country alone can make good hounds, or that Leicestershire has that peculiar privilege.'

Mr. Raby.—'I always thought that Leicestershire was a county in which hounds had less difficulty to encounter than in any other; and that with a good scent, you are almost sure to have sport, even if you do not kill your fox. By the term "Leicestershire," I mean the whole extent of country within reach of Melton Mowbray.'

Mr. Somerby.—'You have been misinformed on these subjects, Mr. Raby. It is true there are extensive tracts in the counties of Leicester, Rutland, and Northampton, extremely favourable to hounds, from the great prevalence of land which has been under grass beyond the memory of man; as, likewise, from the prevalence of large enclosures, which often contain forty acres, and occasionally double that number; but here exists one difficulty. Headlands and hedgerows are friends to huntsmen when their hounds are off the scent: indeed, they may be said then to act as guide-posts; but let hounds throw up in the middle of a fifty-acre piece, and require their huntsmen to direct them, their guide-post is not so readily at his hand as in counties where the enclosures are much smaller. Should he fail to find the chase on one side of his ground, having, of course, ascertained that it is not on ahead, he has a long way to travel for it to the other, whilst his fox is taking advantage of the delay, and making the best of his road to his point. Then, again, another circumstance operates against hounds in these champaign counties, which is peculiar to them. From the luxuriance of the herbage in summer, enough remains in winter to maintain store stock; and herds of cattle and flocks of sheep abound in them. Scarcely a run is seen in which hounds are not brought to check, from encountering one or other of those obstacles; and, although not generally so considered, the stain from cattle is worse than that from sheep. Cattle are also more perplexing on another account; sheep will stand still and confront hounds; but cattle will keep going on, to the great disturbance of hounds in their work, and often on the very line of scent. Then, again, there is much variety of *staple* in the land of the counties of which we are now speaking. It is frequently our lot to commence a run in a fine champaign grazing country, extremely favourable to hounds—and to finish it over cold ploughed land, incapable of holding a scent beyond a passing moment—this, too, at a time when every advantage is required. We have likewise, occasionally, a great many horsemen in the field, some of whom think more of riding than of hunting, and press on hounds at the most difficult points of the chase.'

Mr. Raby.—'But Sir William informs me you have had a capital season's sport up to this period.'

Mr. Somerby.—'Why, Mr. Raby, notwithstanding these difficulties, no country under the sun shows such fine runs as that called Leicestershire does; nor such exquisite enjoyment of them, for the peculiar nature and disposition of it. Indeed, a friend of mine says that the very act of riding to cover over Leicestershire, on a hunter, is nearly equal to following hounds in a run over a great many of the provincial countries. But that I should have had a good season's sport up to this period and especially as the weather has been so favourable to it, is not in the least to be wondered at, when I say that I have generally hunted with the hounds *of the first sportsman that England has hitherto seen.*'

Mr. Raby.—'Of course you mean Mr. Meynell, who hunts what is called the Quorndon, or Quorn country, whom I have heard so much of, but never had the pleasure of seeing. Perhaps you will favour me with a description of his person and character, which, as I understand you have long enjoyed his friendship and confidence, you must be well qualified to do; but, in the meantime, if you please, we will drink "Success to fox-hunting," in a bumper. Although no fox-hunter myself, I heartily wish it success. It is a manly, fine exercise, affording health to the body, and much matter for a contemplative mind. In few situations of life, indeed, are the faculties of man more prominently displayed. Fortitude, good sense, and collectiveness of mind, have in it a wide field of action, and a sensible sportsman would be a respectable character in any grade of life.'

Mr. Somerby.—' You have not over-rated the good properties of fox-hunting, and allow me to add to your panegyric upon it. In the first place, where will you find better society than by a cover-side in Leicestershire, and numerous other counties? In the next, it links all classes together, from the peer to the peasant. Then, again, *it is the Englishman's peculiar privilege.* It is not to be found in any other part of the globe, but in England's true land of liberty—and may it flourish to the end of time! "*Success to fox-hunting,*" I say, with all my heart, and will now comply with your request:—

'Mr. Meynell is of the middle height, of a compact and well-proportioned form: with a highly expressive countenance, and a very intellectual eye. His manners and general deportment are those of a man of the highest fashion, and he combines zeal with talent, which would render him distinguished in any pursuit that might be congenial to his inclination and taste. Fortunately for fox-hunting, he made that his election, and although I hope he has not yet seen half his days, he has done more for the improvement of the science of the chase than any other man. In fact, his opinions have already become maxims, amongst which are the following:—

'"Hounds," he says, "should combine strength with beauty, and steadiness with high mettle.

'"Perfection of shape consists in short backs, open bosoms, straight legs, and compact feet.

'"The first qualities of hounds are fine noses, docile tempers, steadiness to their game, and stoutness in chase.

'"If flagrant propensities discover themselves in a young hound, hang him at once.

'"Walk your hounds amongst riot (*i.e.* hares and deer) in the summer, and hunt the woodlands, in which foxes are plenty, at least two months before the regular season begins.

'"Perfection in hounds in chase lies in their hard running with a good scent, and patient hunting with a bad one, together with invincible stoutness, when called for.

'"The greatest faults are skirting, over-running the scent, and babbling. Never breed from a hound that quits the line in chase, however good in all other respects. The fault will surely descend to his or her produce.

'"Do not lift your hounds when they are at fault, until you are satisfied that they require it; but encourage them to take pains; and keep your field aloof, so that the steam from the horses may not destroy the scent. Let them be cast in two lots—the head whipper-in taking hold of one, and the huntsman of the other.

'"When a fox breaks cover, avoid too much hallooing; it makes hounds wild, and often mars sport.

'"The more quietly whippers-in turn hounds, the better; if they are too free with their rating and their whips, hounds will not turn as short as they should do, from fear of the lash.

'"When the hounds are going to cry, let them be *encouraged*, not *driven* to do so, if it can be avoided. If a hound will not go readily to cry, he had better be drafted at once. It is essential to sport that hounds should get *quickly* to cry, or a good head cannot be carried by them in the burst, which renders it imperfect, notwithstanding the pace may be good.

'"If a fox hangs long in cover, leave him, rather than mob him to death. He may have a reason for doing so, which he will sooner die for, than forego; and he may show good sport at another time.

'"Do not think too much about killing foxes, or of '*blood*,' as the term is. The wildest pack of hounds have been known to kill most foxes, by skirting and meeting them in covers; whilst they have seldom killed a really good fox in a straightforward run. Murdering foxes in covers is an absurd practice. Seasoned foxes are as essential to sport as seasoned hounds.

'"When once you have established a pack of foxhounds,—*which it requires ten years to do,*—be cautious of admitting strangers from other packs amongst them *during the season.* Hounds should be well acquainted with each other, for they look to each other in difficulties, beyond what may generally be imagined. Hounds are jealous to a degree; and many, naturally steady, will be induced to run riot by one bad example, especially if exhibited by a stranger. In short, one faulty hound, as one injudicious rider, may defeat the most promising prospect of sport."

'Mr. Meynell,' continued Mr. Somerby, 'is eminently qualified to be at the head of such a country as the Quorn, by the command he has acquired over his field, owing to the respect paid to his character as a sportsman. He is often heard to address them thus:—

'"Nothing gives me more pleasure, gentlemen, than seeing my hounds afford you good sport; and nothing more pain, than your marring it by over-riding them. That, generally, proceeds from jealousy, which true sportsmen should be superior to; for if you are near enough to see hounds do their work, you ought to be satisfied with your place, and care not who goes first. Again, you should keep your eye on the *body* of the hounds, instead of depending on two or three which are leading; and you should always anticipate a check, which sheep, cattle, teams at plough, arable land, or a road, are all likely to produce. Remember that every check gives your fox an advantage over hounds, and that scent is of a fleeting nature, soon lost—never again to be recovered."

'Mr. Meynell is a bold and superior horseman. In fact, no practicable fence will stop him, when his hounds are running; but he takes no unnecessary liberties with his horses. His language to his hounds is at once emphatic and distinct, as well as cheerful and musical in the extreme. His scream, or view-halloo, is, indeed, wonderful, thrilling through the heart and nerves of all who are within hearing of it. He is as great a favourite with the farmers, as he is popular among his equals; and he has secured the esteem of the former by the following praiseworthy conduct:—Although he is very punctual to his time of throwing off, and would not wait more than ten minutes for a duke, he will wait twenty for some graziers, whose horses he sees at the cover-side, when he knows there is a cattle-fair in the neighbourhood, at which their presence is required. He here shows that acuteness and right judgment which are conspicuous throughout his entire character, and have led to the eminence he has attained, as the master of a pack of foxhounds in the finest country in England.'

Mr. Raby.—'I am delighted with your description of this fine sportsman: will you favour me with some account of his establishment?'—a question suggested by *Frank*, who whispered in his father's ear that he should like to know the name of Mr. Meynell's huntsman.

Mr. Somerby.—'With the greatest pleasure. I shall not feel weary of recapitulating scenes and circumstances which have been, and I hope will continue to be, the source of the chief pleasure of my life. Mr. Meynell has two packs of hounds; one called the young, and the other the old pack; the latter consisting of hounds of three years old and upwards, none of two years old being admitted into it, unless a very high opinion be entertained of their steadiness and abilities. The young pack are hunted twice a week, in woodlands as much as possible, and in the least popular covers, having a few steady old hounds to assist them; and it is to the old pack that the best parts of the county are assigned, in which they meet four days in the week, when the weather permits.

'The name of Mr. Meynell's huntsman is John Raven, a man of good parts, and of peculiarly sportsmanlike appearance. He has the eye of a hawk, the voice of a stentor, is a good sportsman, and not to be excelled in horsemanship. (At these words Frank's eye glistened, and he was heard to heave a sigh —as much as to say, How I should like to see that man!) His two whippers-in are equally effective with himself; but, strange to say, one of them (Jones) has but one leg, having suffered amputation for a white swelling, and the loss is supplied by cork.'

Mr. Raby.—'What a game man must Jones be! I have often wondered, Mr. Somerby, that Mr. Meynell should reside at Quorndon Hall, as I see, by the map, that it is situated quite at the outside of the most open and best part of the county. I conclude, however, that it is, as a residence for a master of foxhounds, in every respect complete.'

Mr. Somerby.—'Quorndon Hall, as a house, although pleasantly situated, on the bank of the river Soar, which runs partially through the grounds, has no pretension beyond the rank of country gentlemen's houses in general; neither is it upon a large scale. Its situation, also, is not central; but it has one advantage, which Mr. Meynell thinks much of. It is within easy reach of the forest of Charnwood, which affords excellent opportunities for making young hounds, as well as of cub-hunting, in the autumn, with the old ones. That forest abounds with foxes—is good scenting ground; and we hunt there long after the good country is shut up;—in fact, until May-day, at which period of the year it is desirable, for more reasons than one, that hounds should not have far to travel to cover. Mr. Meynell is, therefore, partial to Quorndon as a residence; and he has a temporary kennel in the Market Harborough country, in which his hounds lie, when the fixture is in that quarter.'

Mr. Raby.—'You are, I conclude, domiciled at Melton Mowbray. All I know of that town is, from having once passed through it, on my road to the north of England; but I did not get out of my carriage. It appeared to be but an insignificant place.'

Mr. Somerby.—'And it is so; it possesses but one inn, and that a very bad one; no bank, and very few good houses. But it is well situated for a sportsman, during his residence in the county; as almost every good cover in Mr. Meynell's, as well as in the other hunts, is to be got at from it; and, weather permitting, no man need remain idle in Melton from want of being able to reach hounds.'

Mr. Raby.—'Do you hunt every day?'

Mr. Somerby.—'I do.'

Mr. Raby.—'Is not the fatigue of hunting six days in the week more than the generality of constitutions will bear without injury?'

Mr. Somerby.—'I think not. On the contrary, it is my opinion, that any man, under the age of fifty-five, whose frame is naturally sound, who lives temperately as to wine, and who will allow himself eight hours' bed, will be better in health for such severe exercise. It will render him superior to fatigue, and, barring accidents and epidemics, superior also to disease.'

Mr. Raby.—'But, Mr. Somerby, I am at a loss to know how you get over such fences as I saw in the country between Harborough and Melton; many of them appeared impracticable, or "stoppers," as I am told they are called in the fox-hunting world.'

Mr. Somerby.—'Why, in the language of one of the oldest sportsmen, and hardest riders, in the Belvoir Hunt, *we send our hearts over first and then follow them in the best way we can.*'

Mr. Raby.—'You must get many falls, every year.'

Mr. Somerby.—'Of course we do; but we think nothing of falls. Show me the man who says he never gets them, and I will tell him he seldom sees hounds—at least *few good runs*; and this in any country. But, to quote another of our best men (*singulus in arte*, I was going to say), "Falls go for nothing, provided you don't let go your horse; but a man looks very small, running across a field, in a red coat, booted and spurred, crying out, *Stop my horse!—pray, sir, stop my horse!*" The answer generally is, "It would be a pity to stop him, sir—he is going so beautifully."'

Mr. Raby.—'I am really ashamed of catechising you thus, but the fact is, exclusive of the pleasure I myself derive from your description, this second boy of mine, whom you saw the other day with my harriers, has a great wish to become a fox-hunter. Let us fill our glasses, drink a bumper to Mr. Meynell and "*the Noble Science*," and then, perhaps, you will have the kindness to give us a short account of a run with his hounds.'

Mr. Somerby.—'I will with pleasure comply with your request; more especially as it is joined in by my young friend there, whose attention to the hunting of your excellent harriers very forcibly struck me. But he must not think lightly of hare-hunting; Mr. Meynell enters all his young hounds to *hare*, although he expects them to be steady to fox afterwards; which will, no doubt, be the case with your promising son. I know not, then, that I can do better than relate the particulars of the very last run I saw with Mr. Meynell's hounds, rendered more than commonly interesting, perhaps, by the part I myself performed in it:—

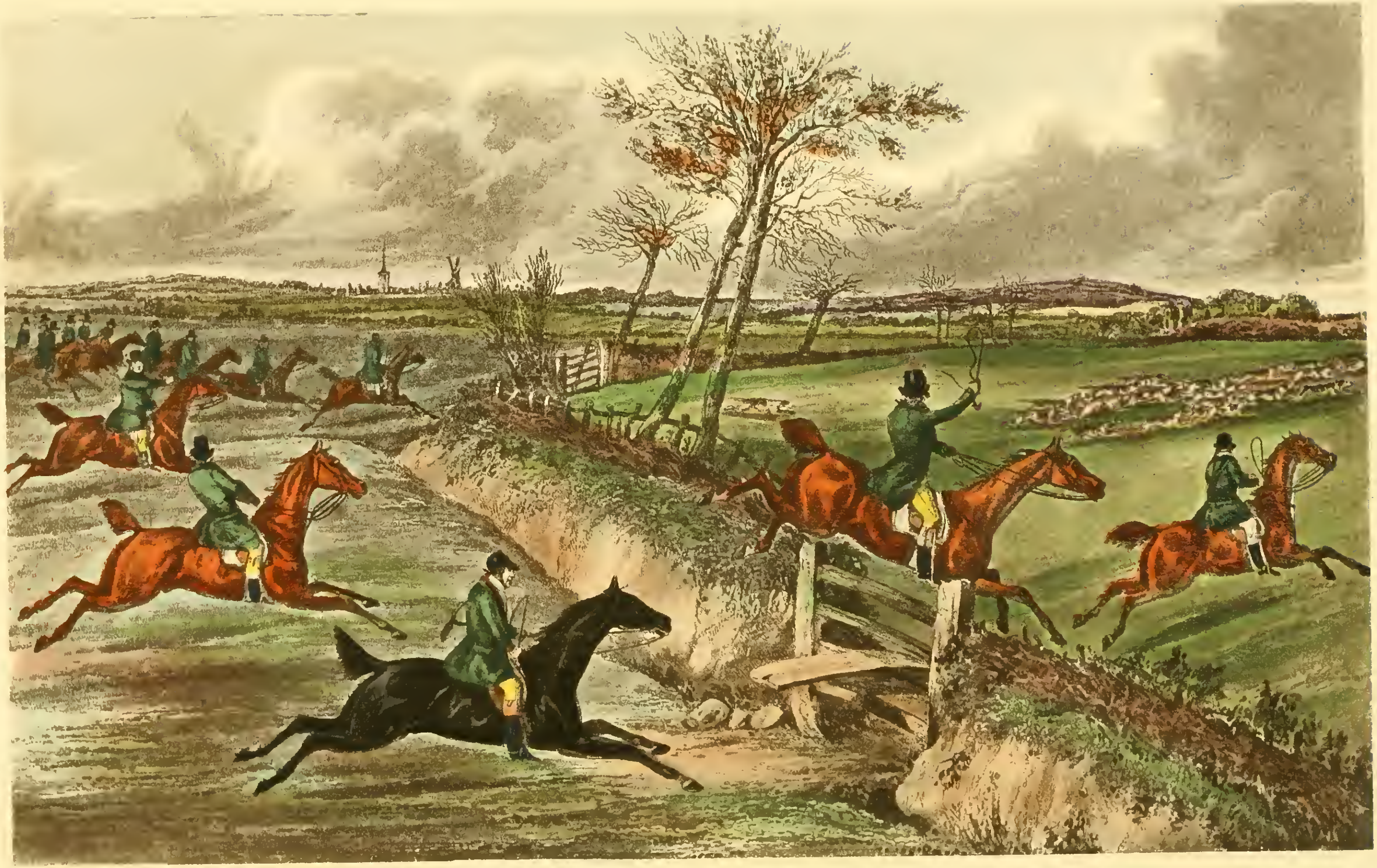
'It was a beautiful morning for scent—at least, so it appeared, and, for once, it kept its promise; but I thought it would be a scenting day, for I observed the clouds were stationary above, and all was clear below, with no *sun*; the barometer was also rising. We had a large field, it being a favourite fixture; and as I had the luck to tally-ho the fox away, I, of course, got a good start. It happened, however, that I this day rode a five-year-old horse, the only one in my stable; for that tender age agrees not with our shire. I had never had a taste of him before; but my groom had, and assured me he would make a trump. "He is as quick as lightning," said he, "and he will face anything; but his temper, as you know, sir, is none of the best. I would advise you, when you can, to take a line of your own."

'Our first fence was a flight of rails, with a yawning ditch on the further side, which I thought it was my luck to have the first fly at; but, looking earnestly at the hounds,—as every man should do, whether on a young one or an old one,—I never saw parson Thompson, who came right across me at the fence, and got a nasty sort of a fall. (By the bye, he told me, afterwards, he "could not stop the old mare, she was so d—d fresh": if so, all well; if not, served his reverence right.) I tried to stop the young thorough-bred one; but he threw up his head, and it was "*no go*"; so, thinking my own the most precious life of the two,—I mean, of more value to me than parson Thompson's,—I let him go; and all I saw, when up in the air, was the old mare's belly and his reverence's head, the rest of his body being under his mare. However, I never touched him, I am happy to say; and two others, besides myself, did as I did; but the third was not *quite* so fortunate. He jumped, as he thought, on the parson's head; but, as luck would have it, it was only his hat, as his head had just that moment slipped out of it. You are aware, Mr. Raby, these things will happen in our very fast country, and are thought little of; although it is no joke to get a fall at the first fence, with such a crowd behind you, each man trying to be in front, and all as jealous as newly-married women at a ball. However, I kept my line; and, if I remember right, the next fence was nothing—*only* a gate, a stiff one, to be sure; but young ones are always good at timber—that is to say, if they will but look at it.

'Now the pace soon began to *tell*; for the country rode infernally deep, and there was no getting a nick by a turn, as the fox went straight on end. There were not more than eight or ten of the field very near to the hounds, and no one exactly on their line. In fact, I saw plainly how things were going. Puggy was facing the cream of the country, and I said to myself, "*We are in for a tickler.*"

'I began to be sorry, however, that I was riding my five-year-old; indeed, I meant to have had him as my second horse, and I must say my groom advised me to do so. However, there was nothing to be done, now, but to let him go; and as I only gave two hundred for him, at Newmarket, I thought I might try what he was made of at once. You know, Mr. Raby, it's no use keeping horses at Melton merely to look at; consequently, if they are good for nothing, we send them at once to the hammer. We let them try their luck in the *provincials*, when they cannot live over the grass.

'The next fence was a bullfinch, as black as'—(Here Mr. Somerby was interrupted by Frank asking his father what was meant by a 'bullfinch fence'; but his father was unable to answer the question)—'The next fence,' resumed Mr. Somerby, 'was a bullfinch fence, as black and as dark as the shades below: you could not, indeed, have seen through it with a lantern. Then as to what there might be on the other side, Heaven knew, but I did not. I only guessed there was a yawning ditch, and very likely a stiff rail to boot. But what was to be done? The hounds were going the top of the pace—no time to turn to the right or to the left; two fellows nearer to them than I was (didn't like that, you know, Francis, eh?) and Cecil Forester, close behind me, roaring out, "Go along, sir, for God's sake!"—so at it I went. It was a rasper ("a *rasper!*" exclaimed Frank, but only in hearing of his father), surely, and I cannot say I was sorry when I found myself well landed in the next field. Our party was now becoming select. There were only five of us right well with the hounds; and although many were near, some were already beaten, and some *nowhere.* But, to be sure, the pace was awful. "Sharper than common, this morning," cried George Germaine to me, and he seldom sings out, as you know, on that score; "how does the young one like it?" Indeed, he has been heard to say, during the Bibury meeting, that a racehorse never yet went fast enough to please him; and that, if it would not hurt him, he would like to be shot out of a cannon's mouth. Albeit, there was no cause for complaint now; still my horse appeared to be going at his ease; in short, he delighted me. I said to myself, "*You are worth double what I gave for you.*" He jumped an ox-fence (Frank here again looked surprised), the next but one after the bullfinch, and then a stile, with an awkward foot-bridge. A widish brook he, of course, took in his stride—for all young ones will leap brooks, if the riders will only let them go their own pace at them; so I did not think much of that; but I could not help saying to myself,—for there was no one very near to have heard me,—"*I have got a trump,* I believe; the blood of Herod will tell." Still he kept shaking his head in an extraordinary manner; I had never seen him do so before. If I had had my whip in my hand, I should have given him a "*nobber*"; for, you know, it's awkward work going very fast at high and strong timber—post and rail, or what not—with a blind ditch on the rising side, and your horse shaking his head like a terrier killing a rat. I could not do this, however; for I had lost my whip, and part of my breeches as well, at that infernal bullfinch. I know not how it happened, but that day I was not in leathers; for John Hawkes and myself always ride in leathers, though people say "it looks *slow.*" I suppose Pritchard thinks corduroys less trouble; for he often says, when he wakes me, "Likely to be wet, sir; better not wear leathers to-day." (The washerwoman polishes the corduroys, and he cleans the leathers.) To proceed with my story. When we checked for a minute or two under Carlton Clumps, I found what it was that made the young one shake his head. He had got a thorn in one cheek, out of that infernal bullfinch, and the blood was streaming down the other, from a rip from one of the growers in it. I got the thorn out the best way I could; but my horse was evidently in much pain. What was to be done? I could have cried; for I love horses better than most things, and abhor cruelty in any shape. I condemned myself; I wished I was anywhere but where I was, and said to myself, "What could have possessed me to ride Brilliant to-day, when I have nine seasoned hunters, all sound, in my stable, and every one fit to go; and Griffiths, my groom, told me I had better not?" "I'll go home," I said; but, confound it, at that very moment, Champion and Statesman hit off the



"You are worth double what I gave for you."

[illegible]

scent; Meynell took off his cap, and gave a scream;- and what could I do? What would *you* have done? The young thorough-bred one had recovered his wind; and, as he shook his head less, and played cheerfully with his bit, I hoped he was in less pain. He was carrying me magnificently—not more than a dozen of us with the hounds; a splendid country before us — I took the lead again.' (Here Frank heaved another sigh, and became restless.)

'I shall never forget,' continued Mr. Somerby, 'the third fence we now came to, which was out of the next field but one to Shankton Holt cover. It was not a *double* but a *treble*. It was of this description;—thank Heaven! there are not more than three or four of such in most runs;—first, a ditch; then a rail; then another ditch; and then another rail. You see there is no landing for a horse, if he takes fences of this sort at twice, except *on* the first rail, or *in* the second ditch; but the old ones *will* double them, when very well handled by their riders.

'Now the wind was well in Brilliant, and I had found he would face anything; but I doubted his being up to this queer *double*, or "*treble*," as I have called it. I sent him at it, then, at the rate of twenty miles an hour, thinking to take it all at a fly; but far as the clever young horse flung himself, he could not clear the whole. He alighted with one fore-leg *over*, and the other *under*, the outermost rail, and gave me a thundering fall. "It's unfortunate," said I to myself, glancing my eye at the fence, as I rose from the ground; "if I had known that that middle rail had been so weak, we would have gone "in and out clever," as Cholmondeley says; "at least, we should have got over with a scramble. I am out of luck to-day," added I; "but here goes again," and soon jumped into my saddle.

'The hounds having turned towards me a little, I was very soon in my place again. "What now?" said one. "Disasters come thickly this morning," cried another. "*All right* again," replied I; "take care of yourselves, for we are in for business to-day; and I perceive one or two of you have been paying your respects to Mother Earth. Don't halloo till you are out of the wood, my boys."

'The scent appeared to get better and better;—indeed, the pace had been awful since the check in the windmill piece.

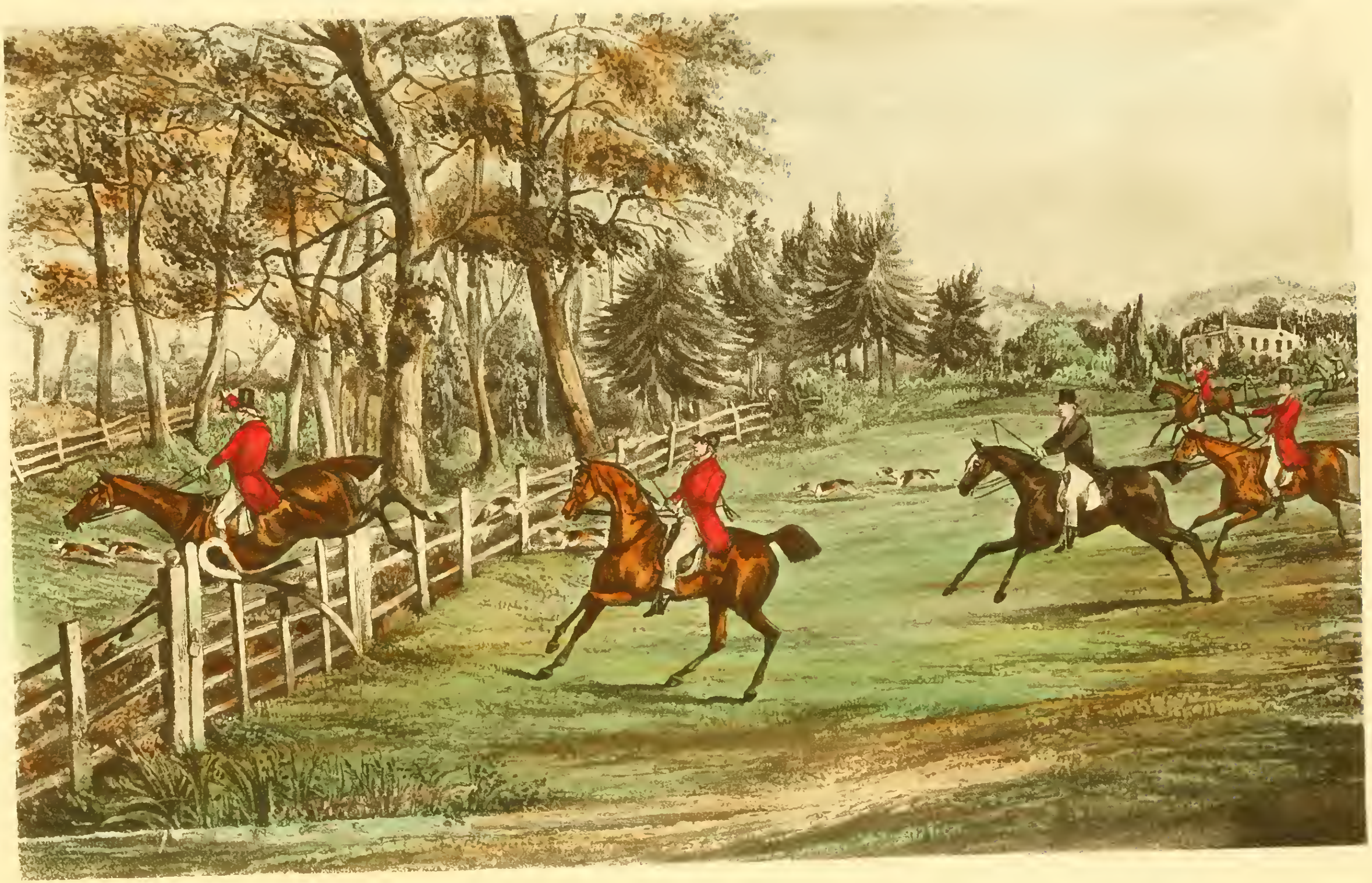
I looked back twice, and could only see four of the field in our rear, and there were but five besides myself well with the hounds. "This is beautiful," I said: "*Divine!*" shouted John Hawkes. "Indeed it is, sir," said Wing, the grazier, going in his usual place. I thought so too. I could not help giving them a cheer, which I don't often do, and got a rebuke for my pains. "Leave 'em alone, sir," exclaimed Meynell; "they cannot be doing it better; I'll bet a thousand on my hounds, if you will not over-ride them." Ten minutes more, however, began to tell tales. One of the best nags out of Melton was about to look queer,—and so did his owner too, for he had been just saying he could go for another hour. It is true he had rammed him along at a devil of a rate, and he rides with rather too slack a rein. "Never loose their heads, my boy, whatever you do," said my old uncle to me, soon after I was breeched: and no man's advice was better than his. He was one of the best of his day; but still I think he would be called "*slow*" now.

'But to continue our run. We crossed the brook under Norton-by-Galby, and went as straight as a line for Rolleston-wood, Forester and Lambton being the first over it, and my young one following in the very foot-holes of their horses. "Ha! ha!" said I to myself, as we rose the hill in Galby-field, which, by the bye, being deep and stiff, took rather tight hold of the nags—"another ox-fence, and most likely another fall." —"I'll *not* have this ox-fence," said I; "they are turning to the right, and I'll make for yonder sheep-pen in the corner." But there was no such luck for me, or my horse. "It is as fast as a jail-door," said Loraine Smith, who was trying to open the gate; "and there is not room to jump into and out of it." What was to be done? The hounds were going with a burning scent, and appeared to be bearing away to the left. "Here goes, then," said I; "there is nothing else for it"; so catching fast hold of the young one's head, I sent him manfully at the ox-fence; but it had like to have been *a case*. The ditch was broad and deep (Frank was here observed to listen most attentively, with the hope, no doubt, of being better acquainted with the nature and character of this ox-fence), the hedge thick and plashed, and the rail beyond them strong. Neither was this all. There was a considerable fall, or *drop*, into the next field, which would have been bad enough had my horse landed himself on the ridge; but, unfortunately for us both, he alighted in the furrow, which was deep and sticky. The drop must have been six feet, at the least, and he had a hard struggle to keep his legs, for he must have cleared more than seven yards in length, or he would not have got over it at all. *It told upon him*; but I soon got him upon a headland, and, standing up in my stirrups, took a good pull at his head, which recovered him wonderfully, before he got to the end of the ground, which was sixty acres or more; but you know, Mr. Raby, the thorough-bred ones will do this. In short, he cleared a high gate into the Uppingham and Leicester road, a little to the right of Billesden, and a large, straggling, blackthorn hedge, and a ditch out of it, with apparent ease to himself, and greatly to my delight. "This cannot last long," I said. "I wish the fox would die, or that I had any horse in my stable save this; but Pug must go to ground in the Coplow, or, at least, we may come to a check in it." The devil a bit; he never went into the Coplow at all, but straight away, as if for Lozeby plantations. I shall kill the young one, thought I; but what could I do? We went right over Tilton field—the worst ground in the country for a tired one—and out of it I got another fall; but I believe it was my own fault. The fence was of this description,—it was plashed, *newly* plashed, with growers in it as thick as a man's leg; but (confound all Leicestershire hedgers and ditchers!) the brushwood leaned, uncut, towards me, over at least two yards of ground, and there was a wide ditch on the landing side. Brilliant was going gallantly at it, when, perhaps thinking I was upon Harkaway——'

Mr. Raby.—'Pardon me for interrupting you, Mr. Somerby, in your highly interesting and well-told description of this fine run; but allow me to ask why those who have such large studs of hunters at Melton do not always have two horses out each day, which would afford a chance to change in the course of the runs; at all events in many of them?'

Mr. Somerby.—'Your remark is an obvious one. A few of our hardest riders are inclined to do so, and I hope to live to see the plan generally adopted. The difficulty appears to exist in procuring fellows with brains in their heads to ride the second horses *properly*, so as to bring them up fresh. However, to proceed. Perhaps, thinking I was on Harkaway, who is rather slack at his fences, or, more likely, fearing we might drop short, I rammed my spurs into the young one's sides, and he jumped further than he need have done. He kept his legs on landing, but the third step he took afterwards, his toe struck the top of one of those ant-hills with which that part of Leicestershire abounds, and down he went on his head. He rolled completely over me, and we lay on the ground together. He was up first, however—for I could neither stir hand nor foot; but it was only from the wind being knocked out of me, and in a very few minutes I caught him. Indeed, he was walking quietly away, with his back turned upon the hounds, having very little puff left in him; in other words, he appeared regularly pumped out. Nor did I like his appearance at all; it was anything but pleasing. His tail was shaking—his flanks worked violently—his nostrils were much distended: there was that glare of the eye, also, which horses exhibit when they are much overworked: and he staggered as I leaned my weight on the stirrup. I stood still for a moment, but could hear nothing. "It's all over," said I; "they have run away from me; I must go home"; and I patted the young one on the neck, saying, "Well, you have gone a good one," and walked him along a headland to a gate which led to a hard road. Here he struck into a trot, without being urged to it by me, which plainly showed he was recovering himself; and the bleeding from his cheek had ceased. "Hark!" said I; "surely I hear the hounds"; but Brilliant had heard them before me. From a trot he struck into a gallop, and I saw them about a mile ahead of me. "The fox will not long face this wind," said I; "I have a chance of dropping in with them yet. By Jove, they are coming round to me; he has turned short for Quenby. I shall catch them at Newton village. What a tickler the nags must have had over the Newton hills!"

'As I predicted, I fell in with them in a road a little beyond the village. There were eleven men with the hounds, and I made the twelfth; all the rest, as O'Kelly said, after one of Eclipse's races—"*nowhere.*" "Where have you been?" said one. "*Where I deserved* to have been," was my reply. "Are you hurt?" "No." But my horse! what state was he in? Why, I will tell you. The hard road had greatly recovered him and he leaped a widish place out of the lane, when the hounds crossed under his nose, as well as he could have leaped it in



"He's heart of oak!"

the morning. "*He's heart of oak*," said I; and I sent him at a flight of rails nearly as high as his back, which he cleared with apparent ease. In short, he appeared to be the freshest horse in the field; but he had had his puff, whilst the others were going over the Newton hills (remember, he was only a five-year-old). Distress was apparent in all; even Bernado began to refuse, which he never does till he is beat (Forester swears he never *was* but twice); and Meynell's grey looked very much like compounding. Germaine got fast in a sheep pen; for although Melon jumped into it, he would not jump out; in short, the jump had left him, and we never saw him again. "Where's the best place?" cried Cholmondeley, who could not face some timber, and was looking for a *creep* through a bullfinch; he found it not, and we saw no more of him. "How shall we get over the brook?" holloaed Lockley, who would have jumped one twice as wide this morning, and thought nothing about it. "*Go quick at it*," said I; and Brilliant went a yard beyond it. "Well done the five-year-old!" holloaed Martin Hawke, who was the next moment over head and ears in the water; his horse never rose at it at all.

'There were now only five of us with the hounds, and it began to be labour and sorrow with us all. As for Brilliant, it was all over with him. The flash in the pan had exploded—perhaps had been extinguished by the brook. Nevertheless, I am ashamed to say, I persevered with him, but I could scarcely lift him along;—he dragged his hind legs through the fences, and I could not make him rise. He was, in fact, twice down on his head in the space of a mile and a half, though we did not part company. In addition to this, with the finest mouth in the world, he leaned half his weight on my hand, and the hounds were leaving me apace. "I'll try him *once* more," said I to myself; so got him on a smooth headland (for ridge and furrow were destroying him), and sent him at a stile at the end of it. For the first time in his life he refused; I put him at it again, and I thought he was going to take it; but he had not the power to rise, and, swerving a little to the left, he ran his head into the hedge, and floundered on his knees on the bank. I jumped off him immediately, and thanked him for not giving me a fall. Now what a situation was I in! I could still see the hounds, and the five men going by their side. But I could only see them; I could no longer be with them. Like King Richard, at Bosworth, what would I not have given for a horse!

'The sequel is now to come. The fox was killed about three miles farther on, after one of the finest and severest chases recorded, even in Leicestershire. But in what condition were myself and my horse? As for me, I was bruised and sore, and had dislocated my right thumb; I had also left my whip and a slice of my breeches in the bullfinch; but these were only trifles. I trembled for the fate of the five-year-old, and could not bear the sight of his wound. I looked for a village and could see none; but I saw the house of a Leicestershire grazier, and that was enough for me at the moment. I led Brilliant to his stable, and his hack conveyed me to Melton.

'"Richards," said I to my groom—and no man has a better—"send a helper off with this hack directly, and put yourself in the gig, without loss of time, with everything necessary for a tired and maimed horse, and leave him not till he is recovered; that is to say (for I had my fears), if he *does* recover. It was contrary to your advice that I rode Brilliant to-day; and, unfortunately for him, it has been the hardest run we have had the last three years."

'"It is a pity you rode him, sir," replied Richards, "whilst you had so many other horses quite fit to go. I think he will make the best hunter in your stable in another year or two. But *where shall I find him, sir?*" "At Mr. King's, near Hungerton," was my reply. "He has turned one of his own horses out of his best loose-box on purpose to make Brilliant comfortable." "And *where is he cut, sir?*" asked the anxious groom; "is it a bad over-reach, or have you staked him?" "I have done neither," I said; "get to him as quickly as you can, and you will see."

'I dined that evening at the old club in Melton, where there was a very pleasant party; and went afterwards to another house, where all sorts of fun was going on; but I could have no enjoyment; I thought only of my poor young horse. It is, however, time to finish my story. The following day was Sunday, and I told Pritchard not to call me till ten. However, I grew fidgety; so rang my bell at nine, and asked if there were any tidings from Hungerton? "Yes, sir," said Pritchard, "Richards and the helper returned home last night, after you were gone to bed." "How was that?" I inquired. "*Brilliant was dead, sir, before they reached the house!*" "Shut the door," said I hastily, "and don't come near me till twelve." I had a good mind to have made a vow never to have hunted again.'[1]

At the conclusion, a dead silence was observed for a minute or two; it was first broken by Mr. Egerton, who had listened with the deepest attention. 'I suppose, Mr. Somerby,' he said, 'the scene you have been describing is one of unusual occurrence?'

'You mean the death of my horse?' replied Mr. Somerby.

'Not merely that,' resumed Mr. Egerton. 'It appears to me strange that the word sport, which means diversion, or pleasure, can be applied to the details of the day which you have so minutely described. Here were upwards of a hundred gentlemen assembled, at an immense expense, hoping, no doubt, to enjoy the diversion of hunting a fox; but, by your account, not a tenth part were able to partake of it; for not more than that number saw a hound after the first ten minutes; and those at prodigious peril to their lives, great suffering to their horses, and, in your own case, at the cost of a noble animal's life, and two hundred guineas as well.'

'You have hit my friend *hard*, Mr. Egerton,' observed Sir William. 'I shall listen anxiously to his defence.'

'You know we are no fox-hunters at Amstead, Mr. Somerby,' said Mr. Raby, wishing to put his visitor at his ease; 'we only *blow* our horses now and then with the harriers; and my reverend friend there has never even gone that length.'

'Yes, papa, but *we* do more than that *sometimes*,' exclaimed Frank (Andrew had quitted the room, and gone to the ladies, in the middle of the story); 'you know Farmer Williams's mare dropped down dead, in the middle of a turnip-field, the beginning of this season, in the famous run you had with that slate-pits hare.'

'True, my dear,' replied Mr. Raby; 'but Dick tells me she had only been up from grass a fortnight, and that she died from want of condition.'

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[1] The reader may recollect a description, somewhat resembling this, of a run over Leicestershire; but it is lawful for an author to take a leaf out of his own book.

'Thank ye, Francis,' exclaimed Mr. Somerby; 'I'll drink a bumper to your health. You have given me a capital lift in the defence I am called upon to make to a somewhat serious charge, and to a reflection upon fox-hunters and fox-hunting. You have helped me to the very loop-hole at which I can escape. You shall now hear what I have to say; and, as I am sure you will, one day or another, be a fox-hunter, I advise you to bear in mind my observations. The facts are these:—Mr. Meynell, and some other masters of foxhounds, have brought them to the very highest pitch of perfection of which their nature, I believe, is capable, both as to high breeding and condition; whilst the state of the horses that follow them is left very nearly where it was. Strange to say, Cecil Forester, the very best rider we have amongst us, and supposed to be the best judge of a hunter, declares he never saw half a dozen first-rate *thorough-bred* hunters in his life; the consequence is, that the half-bred horse is still, for the most part, required to do what the thorough-bred cannot more than do; which is, *to go a racing pace over a country*; and he *must* go a racing pace to keep up to Meynell's hounds. Then, again, the hunter remains in the back-ground in another respect. Hounds are preserved in condition all the year round; that is to say, they are kept to a certain point of strength in their food during the summer, and are exercised regularly till hunting again commences. But how is the hunter served? Why, by the absurd prejudice of our grooms, to which we inconsiderately give way, he is stripped of his fine condition at the end of the season,—which, by the way, it has taken half a year to acquire,—and allowed to run three months abroad, accumulating a load of bad, flabby flesh, amidst the persecution of flies by day, and subject to all the vicissitudes of our climate by night. Now what follows? He is taken up in August, and by the end of October—at all events, by the first week in November—is expected to be equal to more than the exertions of the race-horse who has never been entirely thrown out of condition since he was first saddled. These are the causes of such distress and apparent cruelty to the horse that follows foxhounds, and account for the few that, by means of great *accidental* superiority in the animal, *are alone able to see a fast and long run throughout.* Thus, also, the following paragraph, which I saw the other day in print, is accounted for:—"Mr. Meynell's hounds have had great sport this season. Two extraordinary runs happened, of a very rare nature. One was an hour and twenty minutes, without a check, in which they killed their fox. The other, two hours and fifty minutes, without a cast, and killed. The hounds, in the first run, kept well together, and only *two* horses performed it; the rest of the field were unequal to its fleetness. The other run alluded to was performed by the whole of the pack; and though all the hounds were up at the death, two or three slackened in their pace just at the last. *Only one horse went the whole of it.*"[1] But we shall live to see these evils remedied. Some person or another, who has witnessed their extent, and reflected upon the causes, will, one of these days, expose them. We shall then hear less of tired horses, and very little of those killed with hounds, and of runs in which only one gets to the end, as in the extract I have just quoted. Common sense, indeed, *must* at once direct us, if we but give it a chance to do so. If hounds are every year better bred, and go faster, the breed of our hunters must also be higher and more pure. As the condition of the former improves, so must that of the latter; and I have one consolation left me from the unfortunate occurrence which has called forth these remarks. I have made up my mind, in future, to give my horses every chance in their favour that it is in my power to afford them. I have determined never to purchase a horse not quite, or nearly, thorough-bred, so long as I hunt in Leicestershire; nor will I ever throw a hunter quite out of condition again. "Let them down a little in the summer," are my orders to my groom; "but lose not what has caused *you* so much trouble, and *me* such expense, to obtain. Lose not that which, in fact, makes a middling horse a good one; for I fully agree with what I heard that fine sportsman, John Warde, say, the other day, at the cover-side of the Pytchley country, "*half the goodness of horses goes in at their mouths.*"'

'Will you favour us,' said Mr. Raby to his guest, 'with the names of some others of the conspicuous sportsmen who have been hunting in Leicestershire with Mr. Meynell in your time?'

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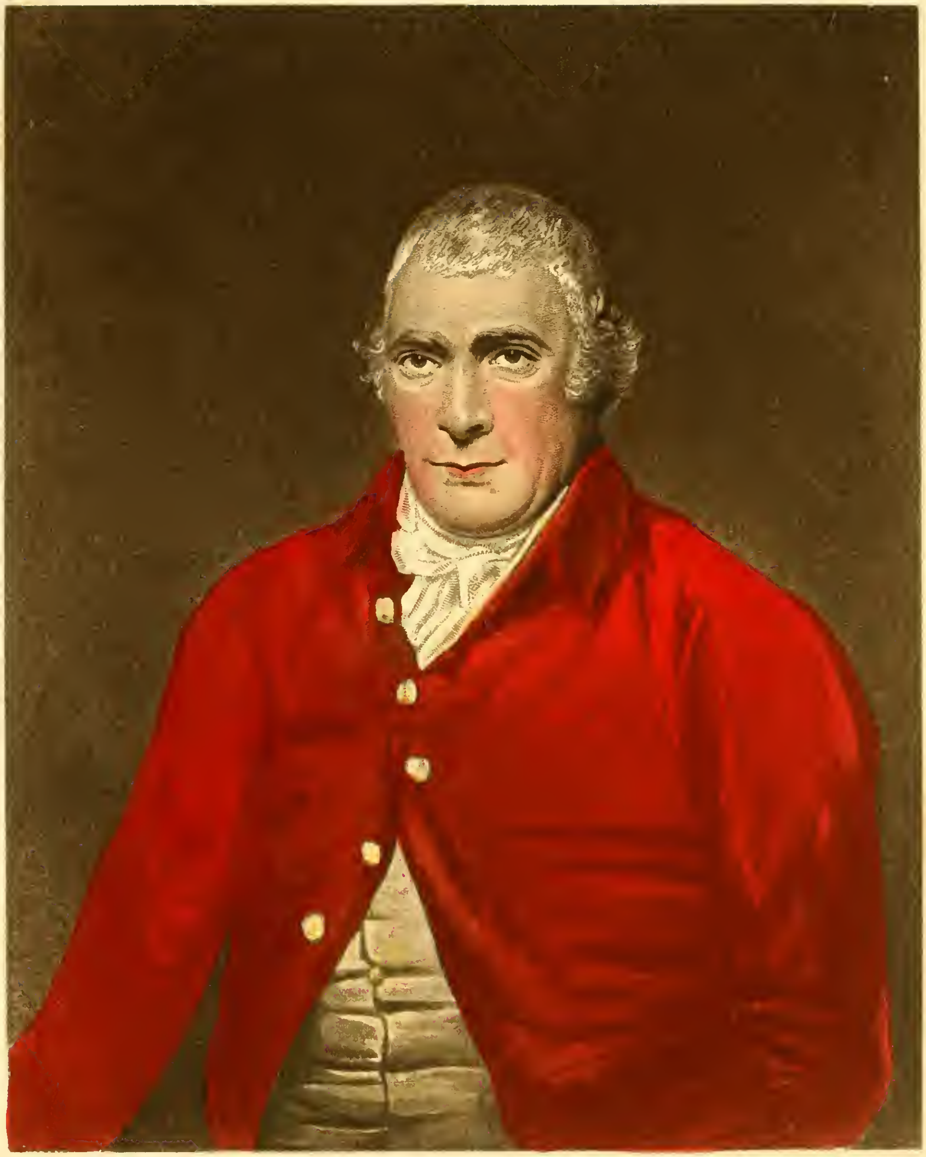
[1] See *The Meynellian System*, by the late John Hawkes, Esq., p. 21. It is more than probable that one of the three horses thus distinguished was ridden by Mr. Hawkes himself, one of the finest horsemen of his day, both over a country and over a course. Many of my readers will remember The Printer, and Featherlegs; *and that Mr. H. always rode horses of pure blood.*

'With the greatest pleasure,' answered Mr. Somerby. 'You will excuse my giving them as they present themselves to my recollection at the moment. There have been amongst them—The Duke of Orleans; Lords Maynard, Spencer, Sefton, Winchelsea, Harborough, Stair, Craven, Robert Spencer, Charles Manners, Robert Manners, Paget, Villiers, Egmont, Chatham, and Somerville; Sirs Carnaby Haggerstone, John Shelley, William Gordon, Harry Featherstonehaugh; General Tarleton, Colonel Carter; Messrs. Loraine Smith, Prince Boothby, Charles Wyndham, Lambton, Ralph Lambton, Forester, Cholmondeley, George Germaine, Martin Hawke, Jacob Wardell, Lemon, Cradock, Thomas and Robert Grosvenor, Goodhere, Norman, Arthur Paget, Conyers, Morant, Assheton Smith, Pole, Saville, Musters, the two Heyricks, John Hawkes, Lockley, Charles Meynell, Hugo Meynell, junior, Orby Hunter, Rose Price, Peach, Boates, Robert Montgomery, Berkeley Craven, Puleston, John Madocks, Vanneck, Bennet, Graham, Harnes (of Glen), Nedham, etc. etc. There are also some excellent sportsmen amongst the graziers of this part of Leicestershire, and none better than Deverell and George Henton. Neither must I omit Ted Hodges of Leicester, a very conspicuous sportsman, in every acceptation of the word; as a judge of cocking, a nonpareil.

'Then, again, there is a new set just coming among us—Lords Plymouth and Foley; Sirs Henry Peyton, Stephen Glynne, and Wheeler Cuff; Messrs. Rawlinson, the Lindows (twin brothers, and capital hands), Rolleston, and Frank Forester; the two Bruens from Ireland (with as many horses as would do for a country fair), Lloyd, the dandy Welchman, Apperley, and Thomas Assheton Smith, better known as "*the* Tom Smith."'

Here the conversation was interrupted (Mr. Egerton was about to speak) by Frank exclaiming to his father, 'Oh, papa, and has Mr. Somerby hunted in the Pytchley country? Would you ask him to tell us something about Dick Knight, whose picture, representing him topping the park-pales on Contract, our huntsman has got in his parlour?'

'You unreasonable rogue,' said Mr. Raby; 'I wonder what you will ask next?'



"Dick Knight."

From a picture by B. Marshall.

Mr. Somerby, however, having overheard the question, good-naturedly replied to it :—

'Why, Francis, I am scarcely old enough to have seen Dick Knight in his very best day; but the prints which you speak of give an excellent idea of the man; and, from the knowledge the amateur artist, to whose pencil we are indebted for them, had of him, as a huntsman and sportsman, we must give them full credit for accuracy of design and character. Has he not exhibited him displaying all the good properties which his calling, as a huntsman to foxhounds, requires? In the first place, what a horseman does he appear! How firm and beautiful is his seat in the tremendous leap he is taking, obliged as he is, at the same time, to stoop forward on his horse to avoid the bough of a tree! Then, what zeal he evinces! and what coolness, while changing his horse during the run, the opportunity being offered by his passing his own stable door. Instead of being in a hurry to mount, he casts his eyes towards his hounds and the country, before he puts his foot into the stirrup. Then, see him with his hounds at fault, and observe his anxiety for their safety, whilst the colt is gambolling in the midst of them; and, lastly, mark him at the finish, with the dead fox in his hand. "*Who-whoop! was never so carried*," cries he, on dismounting from the fore-horse of the team, whose state of exhaustion is so admirably depicted by the artist, that we could swear that, in one more field, the nag must have died, if the fox had *not*. In fact, I have always told my friend, Loraine Smith, for *he* claims the honour of having been the designer, that no hunting prints have ever yet appeared anything like so good as those of which we have been speaking; neither do I believe there have been many better huntsmen than the celebrated Dick Knight.

'Perhaps you will like an anecdote or two, Frank,' resumed Mr. Somerby, 'of this noted man. His master is Earl Spencer, and a fine sportsman his lordship is. On his return from London, last year, at the end of the gay season, almost the first thing Dick said to him, was, that he "feared the country was about to be ruined." Lord Spencer being then high in the administration of it, naturally associated the idea with the general ruin of Great Britain, whereas Dick was only alluding to Northamptonshire as a hunting country. "What now, then, Dick?" said his lordship. "Why, my lord," he replied, "they are going to cut a d—d canal through the best part of our country"; a thing of all others, by the way, most wanted by the inhabitants of it, and which would benefit, instead of injuring it as a hunting country.'

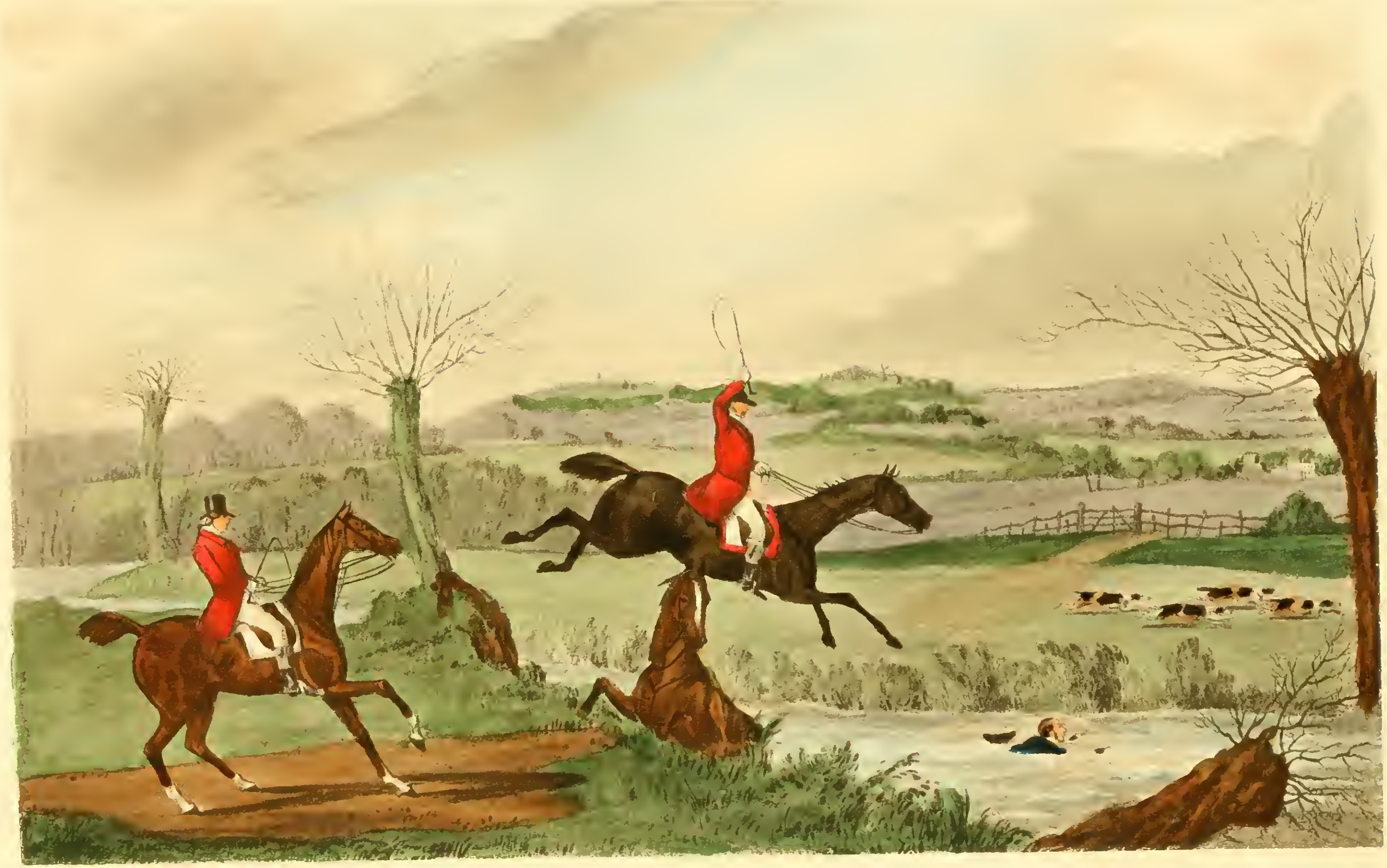
'How so, Somerby?' said Sir William.

'Why, in consequence of the present great scarcity of coals, from want of water carriage,' continued Mr. Somerby, 'you will find, in many parts of Northamptonshire, three high and strong blackthorn hedges, where one only would be required. The object in planting *three*, is, that one may be fit to cut down for fuel at a certain period, and the others follow in succession. I have often been stopped by these fences, which, as you may imagine, nothing without wings can get over.

'But the other anecdote,' resumed Mr. Somerby; 'I must not forget that, as I see my little friend is on the listen for it. There was a parson in the Pytchley country, sadly given to press upon hounds, a fault never forgiven by huntsmen. It happened that, one day, the parson dropped short in a deep brook, and as he was floundering about in the middle of it, Dick rode clean over him, with these words in his mouth: "*His reverence swims like a cork; but never mind him; this is only Friday, and he won't be wanted till Sunday.*" At a subsequent time there was another of these inconsiderate riders with his hounds, who, although well known in the sporting world, happened to be a stranger to Dick Knight. Moreover, he was clad in a blue coat, which added nothing to his appearance and character, in Dick's eyes. At length the gentleman got an awful fall, his horse rolling over him, and he lay as if he were dead. "There," exclaimed Dick; "*thank God, we have done with you!*" In a few minutes, however, Mr. G—— was in his place again, when Knight, observing him, coolly said to himself, "*A resurrection before the time, to a certainty. I had hoped never to have seen you again in this world. I wonder what you'll do next?*"'

'What a funny fellow that Dick Knight must have been, papa,' said Frank.

'Oh,' said Sir William, 'we have not done with him yet, Frank. I was out with the Pytchley, once, when we thought we were in for a blank day. In fact, it was three o'clock, and not a tongue to a fox had been heard. At last a hound, called



"His Reverence swims like a cork!"

[illegible]

Abelard, spoke: "Hark!" said Dick, holding up his cap, that he might hear the better; "that's *Abelard. A reprieve, by the Lord!*" I need hardly add that he was right, for Abelard was the best hound in the pack, and his blood is in most of the best kennels in England; the blood of the Pytchley Abelard, indeed, is a passport to any hound.'

'But we have omitted the best anecdote of Dick Knight,' said Mr. Somerby, 'and my young friend here must have that. Dick was a great favourite with his noble master, and, like all favourites, now and then presumed upon it. Having taken a tremendous leap, one day, on Contract, Lord Spencer, who was next to him, pulled up at it, and paused. "*Come along, my lord,*" roared Dick; "*the longer you look, the less you will like it.*"

'The incident that led to the masterly execution of these prints was a spirit of jealousy between Mr. Assheton Smith and Dick Knight, when they met together, on one particular occasion, in the field, the former riding a celebrated hunter called Egmont, and the latter the equally celebrated Contract. In fact, it was Quorn *versus* Pytchley. The prints were first published by Jukes, a great printseller in London, who is said to have realised fifteen hundred pounds by the copyright, which was made a present to him by Mr. Loraine Smith.

'Loraine Smith, on another occasion, sketched himself in the act of fording a river after hounds, with his coat-skirts tucked up to his shoulders, and thereby getting a considerable start of the rest of the field, with the exception of Lord Maynard, who chanced to follow him; and the lines written underneath the print:—

'"By following Smith, a *cute chap* at a pinch,
Who knows all the depths of the brooks to an inch;
Lord Maynard, too, followed, and both did embark,
Only wetting their tails just below water-mark."'

'I conclude,' said Mr. Raby, 'that Mr. Loraine Smith is a good man across a country.'

'Few better, for his weight,' replied Mr. Somerby; 'his great excellences, as a rider to hounds, are, his judgment, and fine eye to direct him in taking his line. On the 12th December 1792, he went to the end of, perhaps, the finest run that Leicestershire had afforded up to that period, called the

Whetstone day, the fox having been found in Whetstone Gorse, between Lutterworth and Melton. It lasted upwards of two hours, with only one check, and all over grass. Still, the person who most distinguished himself was Jacob Wardle, who, although he (with many others) went away with part of the pack, which could not be stopped, and only got up to the main body of hounds just as they recovered the scent, at a check at the end of a very severe burst, took the lead and kept it until the hounds ran into their fox, at the expiration of the time mentioned. The horse he rode—a thorough-bred grey, afterwards called Whetstone—had never been ridden as a hunter before in his life, and was purchased by Forester, for 250 guineas, in the field. Lord Maynard, however, seeing the distress this horse exhibited, pronounced that he would never be himself again; neither was he. Lord Paget, who rode a horse called Slender; Pole, on True Blue; and Forester, on Sweeper, also distinguished themselves on this memorable day.

'Mr. Loraine Smith, on this day, rode a horse he had not long before purchased of Mr. Berridge; but, not having had a trial of his merits, he had not then given him a name. It was, however, by plunging with him into the river Wellin, near Langton, which he did at no small risk with a horse somewhat beaten, that he was indebted for a sight of the conclusion of this splendid run. He had the good luck to meet the hounds, evidently *running into their fox*, pointing for Market Harborough, having no one in company with them but Mr. Wardle. Mr. Smith's horse soon afterwards declined; and Mr. Wardle, on this young and raw horse, would have been a good two miles ahead of any other man in the field, had the fox not been headed nearly at the finish, which enabled several of his brother-sportsmen to witness it; and a glorious finish it was, too, in the middle of a large grass field. But, as regards Wardle and his raw horse, the most extraordinary part of the story is yet to come. The country about Langton was then just newly enclosed, yet he jumped all the strong post and rail fences without getting one fall. Neither was his crossing the river Wellin undeserving of notice. He pushed his horse before him, into deep water, leaped upon his back whilst he was in the act of swimming, and thus was carried to the opposite bank!

'I remember hearing of another desperate run, in which Mr. Loraine Smith distinguished himself greatly by his fine judgment in riding to hounds. On a day, with the same pack (Meynell's), called "the Alsops-house day," he appeared at cover on a five-year-old horse, of his own breeding, called Shopleton; and one, by his own admission, not of high form as a hunter. He likewise got a bad start, and never could get near the hounds till he met them on Leak Hills, on their return from Gotham Wood. Notwithstanding this disadvantage, towards the end of the run, which embraced an immense sweep of country, himself and a gentleman named Deverill were the only two that continued to keep with the hounds till they came to Kinnoulton cover, when his (Smith's) horse slackened pace. Deverill went on, and was the only man whose horse could raise a canter when the fox was dying. He rode a mare, called Gaylass, got by Lord Grosvenor's famous Mambrino, whose fine picture by Stubbs has been so much admired; and, in consequence of her performance this day, she was sold to Sir John Shelly, and by him to Sir Harry Featherstone, in both instances at large prices, remaining a first-class hunter, in Leicestershire, for several successive years. It was computed, at the time, that, by his knowledge of the country, and the points the fox was making, Smith saved three miles of ground in the course of this run, which is the principal cause of my having detailed the particulars of it to you.'

'Now, Frank,' said Mr. Raby, 'you have had a great treat; so take yourself off to the ladies. I dare say you will dream of Leicestershire and Dick Knight.'

'We shall see him in Leicestershire, some day or another,' observed Mr. Somerby.

'No,' replied Mr. Raby; 'at least, I hope not. Melton Mowbray is no place for younger brothers: and I fear it has often proved too much for elder ones.'

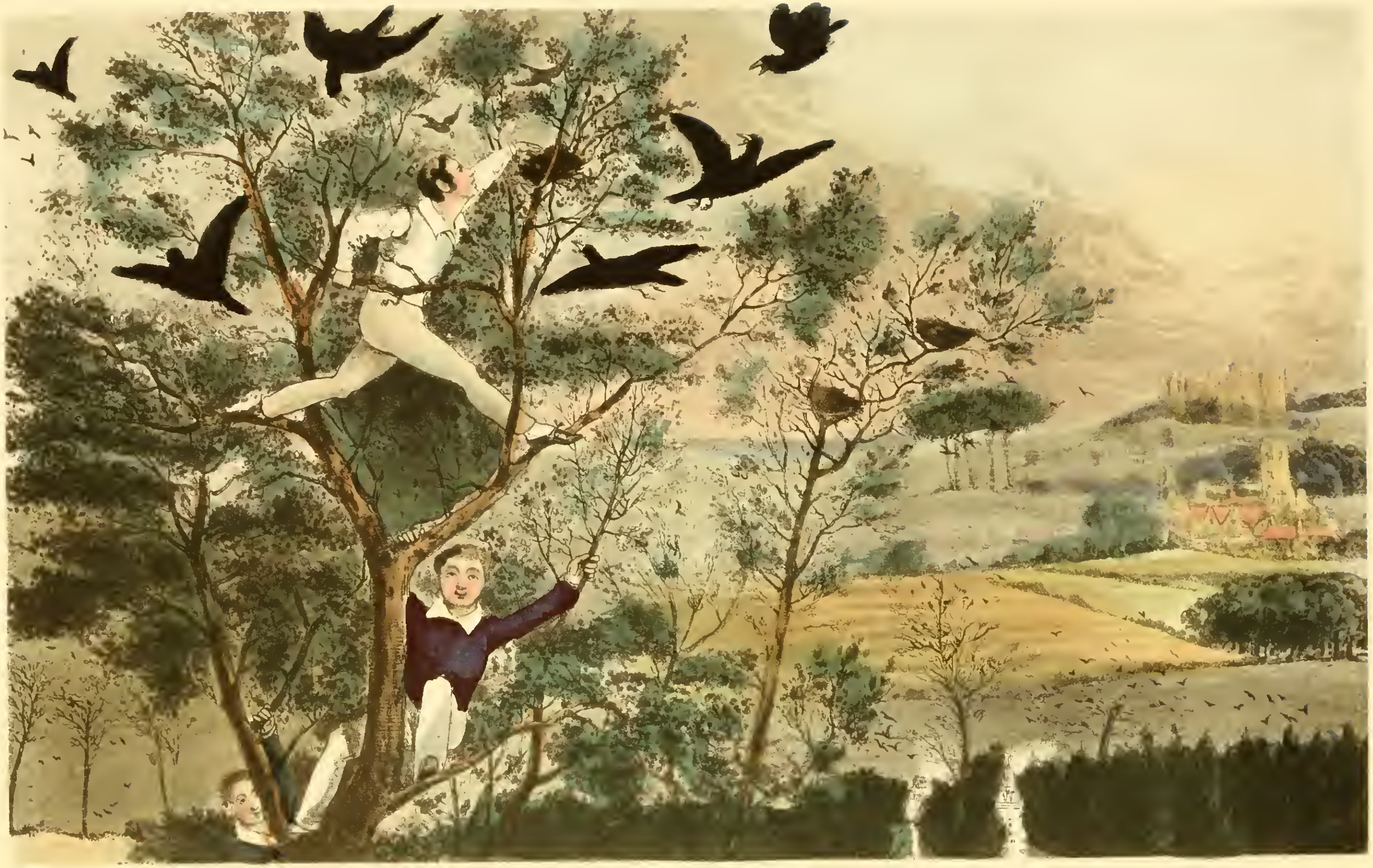
CHAPTER III

Devoted to rural scenes and characters, and combining matter of amusement and instruction, with maxims of sound theory, and examples well worthy of imitation.

THE next day being Sunday, Frank had matters of a graver kind to attend to—all very necessary, however, to guide him in the 'race' he had to run; and the plain, comprehensible sermons he heard in Amstead Church were admirably adapted to that purpose. But, on the Monday, a pursuit was proposed to him, by Jem Perren, the keeper's son, quite as much to his taste, at that early age. This was a game, once in much vogue in England, and especially in counties bordering on the sea-coast, known by the name of 'a crow's-nest race';—that is to say, either a carrion-crow's nest, or a particular one in a rookery, was to be climbed for, by three boys, and he who first put his hand into it was the winner. Now this was not at all to Andrew's taste; so that Frank had to look abroad for his competitors; but he had no difficulty in procuring them. One was the son of the rector, a fine and spirited lad, and of the same year with himself; and the other, a son of a neighbouring gentleman, much of a like kidney.

'That shall be the nest,' said Frank, pointing to one in the highest tree in the rookery. 'Surely not,' said young Chapman; 'the boughs are very slender; indeed they look as if they would break with our weight.' Jem Perren was likewise of this opinion, and began to lament having proposed the day's amusement. 'Nonsense,' said Frank, 'the tree is alive and good at the head, and I'll be bound it will bear us.' In fact, '*possunt, quia posse videntur*,' was his motto; and he thus addressed his competitors:—'Now, my boys, off with your jackets! when Jem gives the word, let us start.'

The race is not always to the swift, but it is sometimes to the *bold*; and this was the case here. It was well enough contested, until the party arrived within a few yards of the summit, when the apparent slightness of the boughs, together with the frightful abyss below, caused young Chapman and the



"Who-hoop! I've done it!"

other boy to pause. But Frank was not to be daunted. With the branches trembling under him, onward he went to his point, and putting his hand into the nest, cried out, '*Who-whoop!*—I've done it! Here are two eggs in the nest,' which he instantly put into his mouth, to secure them from being broken in the descent.

'Glad to see you safe down, sir,' said Jem Perren; 'I was mortally frightened for you; and, if you had tumbled, what would my lady have said to me?'

'Oh,' said Frank, 'if I was, like Andrew, to do nothing but what mamma likes, I shouldn't have much fun. But, Jem, I am sorry to see the rooks have begun to lay, for it shows that it will soon be over with hunting for this year. How curiously these eggs are speckled! but they are not all speckled alike.'

At this moment Mr. Egerton made his appearance, and asked who had been taking rooks' eggs, as it was Mr. Raby's orders they should not be touched. Frank at once confessed himself the culprit, having suffered enough, on a former occasion, from concealing the truth,—in plainer English, telling a direct lie.

'Do you see what misery you have inflicted on those poor birds, which are hovering round their empty nest?' continued Mr. Egerton. 'For my own part, I have always been a great admirer of birds—their notes, their nests, their eggs, and all the economy of their lives;—nor have we, throughout the order of creation, any beings that so continually engage our attention as these our feathered companions. It is my opinion, that whosoever can exercise cruelty towards a sparrow or a wren, the most insignificant of birds, would, when circumstances enabled him, be cruel to his fellow-creatures.'

'But, sir,' observed Jem Perren, 'father says, "take every nest you see, Jem; they are nothing but varmint": so I knows not what to do; and you knows, sir, our farmers gives sixpence a dozen for young sparrows; and in the last year's church-warden's account, I see'd, with my own eyes, seventeen shillings paid for seventeen dozen tomtit's heads, three and fourpence of which came to my share.'

This was something of a damper for fine sentiment; and Mr. Egerton, taking out his watch, observed that it wanted but half an hour of dinner-time.

'What's to be done to-day?' said Mr. Egerton to his pupils, after school, on the morrow following the crow's-nest race. 'I am going in the phaeton, with mamma, to call at the Grange,' answered Andrew; whilst Frank admitted that he was informed, by Dick Perren, of a marten-cat, that he had seen in the big wood; and he believed he could show him the tree in which it makes its bed. 'I suppose, sir, there is no harm in killing him, if we can; as Dick says he not only destroys the game, but the huntsman to the foxhounds will be very glad to have him put out of the way; for his hounds have run him twice, without being able to catch him, and he scratched some of them sadly.'

'The marten-cat,' said Mr. Egerton, 'is a very predatory animal, and, as such, there can be no harm in destroying him; and if you take him alive, which I conclude you will do, I wish to see him previously to your putting him to death, for he is a very beautiful animal. Then, again, of all those called vermin, we have none more admirably fitted for a predatory life than the marten-cat. He is endowed with great strength of body, for his size; is remarkably quick and active in all his motions; has an eye so clear and so perceptive, that nothing can stir without his observation; and, to complete his accomplishments, he has a perfect sense of smelling. Again, his feet are peculiarly adapted to his habits; not treading upright on the balls alone, but with the joint bending, the fleshy parts being embedded in a very soft hair; so that the tread of the animal, even on decayed leaves, in a wood, is scarcely audible by its prey, which it, consequently, very seldom misses getting into its clutches. In fact, everything combines to make him a very destructive animal; and, as he is neither protected by laws nor privileges, I have often wondered that he has so long been suffered to exist in so populous a country as this. I find he was an object of chase in former days, being mentioned, among the beasts of venery, in the *Book of St. Albans*, by Dame Juliana Berners.'

In about a fortnight from this time, Mr. Raby's harriers ceased hunting for the season, and the foxhounds went to finish theirs in a distant part of the country, in which they had a kennel. This was, then, the commencement of what are called the 'dead months.' An active mind like that of our hero, however, could not remain without some stirring pursuit; so

Hunting the marten cat.

he devoted much of his leisure hours to watching the operations of Perren, the head keeper, in breeding and feeding pheasants, of which there were, at that time, but few on Mr. Raby's estates, or, indeed, on any other in the county. Now, Perren was clever in this branch of his calling; and a few of his maxims were so well worthy of imitation, that his young master cherished them through life. Amongst them were the following:—

'In a young breeding-stock, never leave more than one cock to seven hens, or as near to that proportion as you can.

'When the hen pheasant is laying, or sitting, hang a bit of red cloth, or a few links of iron chain, near her nest, and no fox will molest her.

'Have a few patches of buck-wheat sown on the borders of covers intended as pheasant preserves. They operate like the salt-box in the dovecot, in attaching the birds to the spot.

'When you feed in the winter, *beans* are the most economical food, because the small birds cannot eat them, as they do the lesser grain. The small tick-bean is the best.

'The most dangerous time for pheasants, from the attacks of vermin, such as foxes, etc., is after *a wet night* in the moulting season. They are then naturally weak, and their wings being heavy from rain, they do not rise so quickly as at other times. They should now be watched.

'When rearing pheasants by hand, observe the following rules: During the first month, feed with hard egg and ants' eggs, but give nothing to drink. Feed early, but don't let the young birds go abroad until the dew has quite disappeared. Keep them very clean, and shut up at sunset.

'Second month:—Feed on wheat, barley, and ants' eggs. Being now subject to vermin, let them be supplied with sand to roll in; and if the pip seizes them, rub their bills with garlic, finely bruised, in tar.

'Third month:—When the new tail-feathers appear, danger is always at hand. Give them plenty of ants' eggs, and put them out, by day, on a white clover field, but not exposed to sun. You may give them white clover-seed, mixed with other grain.'

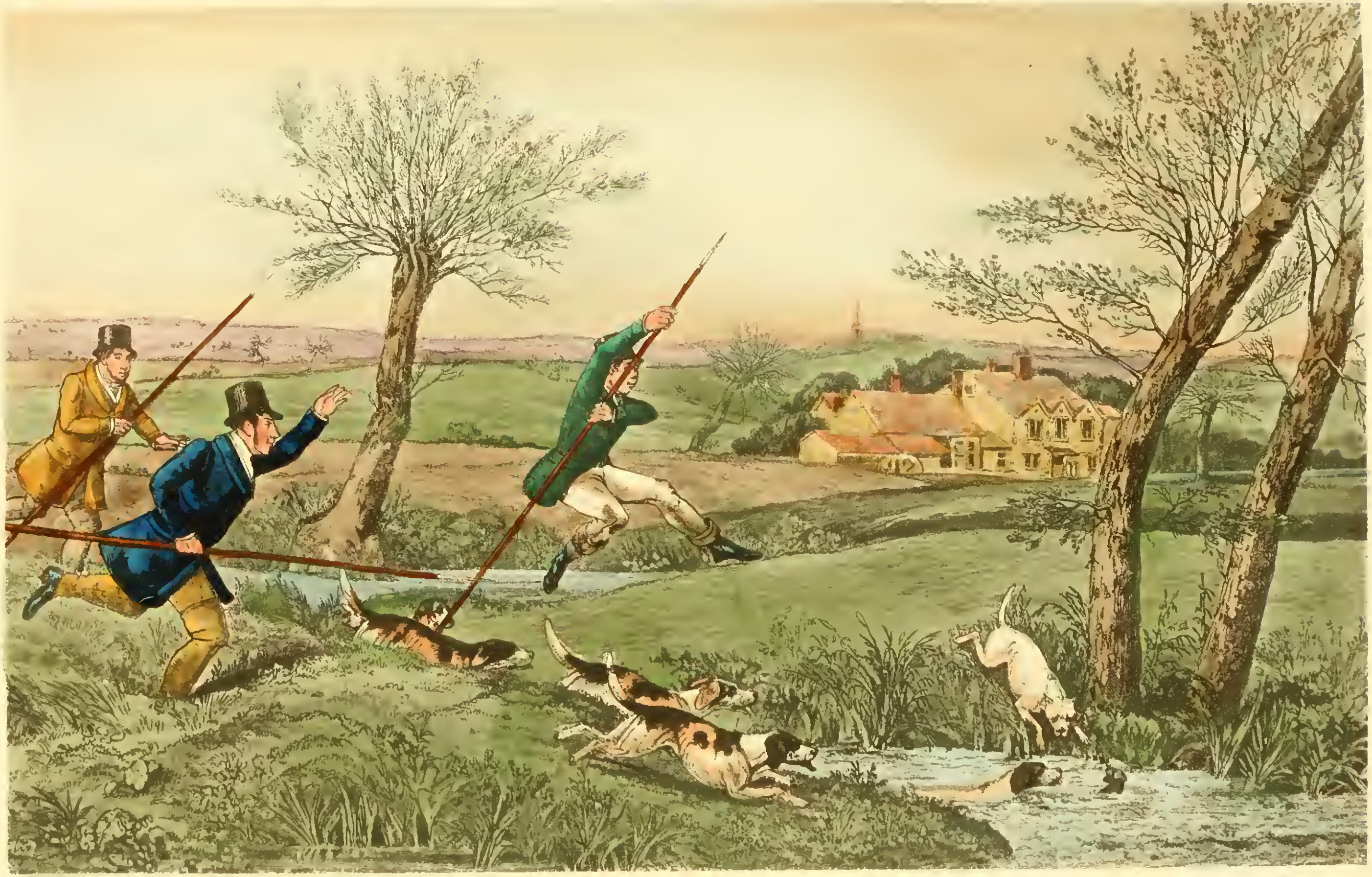
Our hero being observed, on one of the subsequent evenings, by Mr. Egerton, in earnest conversation with his father, in the drawing-room, was thus addressed by him:—'What is in the wind, now, Francis? I perceive you have been coaxing your father for *something*.' 'Why, sir,' replied Frank, 'Jem Perren tells me that Mr. Wright's otter-hounds meet at Cranby Mills to-morrow morning, at five o'clock; and he has consented to my going out with them, provided the huntsman accompanies me, to see that I do not get into danger; but there is no fear of that, as I am only to take my leaping-pole.'

'What!' exclaimed Andrew. 'Does Mr. Wright keep hounds? I always thought he was so poor that he could scarcely keep himself and family, much less hounds.'

'Why, I fear, Andrew, what you say is too true; and, as Wright is a good, worthy fellow, I wish he was better off: but it shows how innate, in man, is the passion for the chase, when he will forego, as poor Wright must, many of the comforts, and even conveniences of life, to indulge it.'

On the following morning, at the early hour of five, Frank Raby and the huntsman were at the Mill, where Mr. Wright was in readiness for the sport, which he had little doubt would ensue, as he had seen some very fresh spraints (excrements) on the banks the evening before, although he had failed in marking an otter to, or lodging him in, his couch. He had but three couples of hounds, and one three parts bull-terrier; but all the party were provided with spears, which likewise served them for leaping-poles.

The brook intended to be tried, having been 'let off,' as the term is, by shutting down the sluices at the mill above, the banks and shallows were in a good state for the purpose; and in less than half a mile, the seal (or foot-ball) of a full-grown otter was discerned, and the scent soon got warm. The ear of these animals being very acute, they seldom wait to be surprised in their couch, and such was the case here. A view-halloo was given by Mr. Wright, on seeing the object of his pursuit dart into the stream, from the hollow of an old willow-tree, about four feet from the ground; and now the chase began. It was for some time doubtful, from the superiority of the animal over the dogs in swimming against the stream, and no opportunity having occurred, during his vents (*i.e.* when rising to the top of the water to respire), to strike him with a spear, as to what the issue would be, whether blood would be the result, or not. In one of his vents, however, whilst out of reach of the spearsman, an opportunity did present itself to the bull-terrier, who leaped from the bank on his prey, and a terrible conflict commenced. The otter instantly dived below the sur-



The otter hunt.

face, carrying the dog with him; and, had not the severity of his bite obliged the otter to let go his hold, Lion would have been very shortly drowned. But the animal had received a wound from the strong jaws of Lion, which so crippled his powers, that in less than half an hour from the time he was first found, Mr. Wright exhibited him on his spear-head, to the great joy of the party, and particularly of Frank Raby, who, to use the words of Taplin, one of the sporting authorities of that day, was 'ecstatic with delight.' Unable to find another, the sportsmen returned to their homes, Frank and the huntsman having been previously refreshed by the honest-hearted master of this small pack.

'Well, Frank,' said Mr. Raby to him, on his return, 'how do you like otter-hunting?' 'Oh, very good fun,' he replied; 'but not so good as hunting with our own hounds, because it is so soon over, for one reason; and again, I don't much like hunting on foot. But, papa, I could have told all about it from those lines Mr. Egerton read to us last night, in the library, from Somerville's *Chase.* It is quite curious how well he described everything I saw with Mr. Wright's hounds. What a sportsman Mr. Somerville must have been, eh, papa!'

'Why,' replied Mr. Raby, 'I am unable to speak decidedly on that point; but he was an amiable man, and a good country gentleman; although, by his liberality exceeding his means, he greatly injured his estate, but not his family, for he had none. Doctor Johnson, however, who lately wrote his life, as a *poet* (the Doctor, I presume, could say nothing of him as a *sportsman*), allows him one merit—that of setting a good example to men of his own class, by devoting part of his time to elegant knowledge; and showing, by the subjects which his poetry has adorned, that it is practicable to be at once a skilful sportsman and a man of letters—a hint which I trust, Frank, you will take to yourself. But the Doctor could not let him off without a *slap.* He says—"He *writes very well for a gentleman.*"'

'Well,' resumed Frank, 'I shouldn't wonder but Wilkins, who drives the Balloon coach, had been reading what Dr. Johnson said of Mr. Somerville; for, on my asking him, the other day, if Sir John Inkleton was not a very good coachman? he answered, "Why, Master Francis, *Sir John drives very well for a gentleman.*"'

As the summer season approached, Frank was sometimes put to a nonplus for his pastime; for, although he was making great proficiency in angling, and had commenced trying his hand at the gun, change was now and then sought for by him; and he addressed his father, on the eve of Whit Monday, with —'To-morrow is our Whitsun fair, papa; I wish you would let Andrew and myself go to it. I hear there is much fun there after the business of the day is over.'

'I am glad to hear it,' replied the father; 'all nations, ancient and modern, have allowed and encouraged sports and festivities amongst the lower orders of the people, as the best means of preventing greater and more serious evils; and he who would check them, when kept within reasonable bounds, commits a great mistake. For my own part, I myself, as a magistrate, rather encourage them, than otherwise; being convinced that, whatever tends to make people happy, tends to make them good; and you know we have very little crime in these parts. Now, I have no objection to your brother and yourself riding over to the Whitsun fair, in the cool of the evening, taking your words for not getting into any mischief.'

Andrew and his brother having partaken of an early dinner, afterwards proceeded, on horseback, to the village revels. And here they met with an incident, which it may not be amiss to relate, as a caution to all fair-goers who are not 'wide awake.' A person approached them at full speed, on rather a shabby-looking pony, whom they found to be the son of the miller at the Abbey, and one who had an excellent opinion of himself, the result, perhaps, of his old father's almost every-day boast, that 'our John is a very 'cute young chap, and not to be done by any on 'em.' 'Oh, young gentlemen,' exclaimed the miller, pulling up the pony with a jerk, 'I hope the Squire is at home.' 'He is,' replied Andrew; 'but what's the matter, John?' 'Oh, sir,' resumed 'our John,' 'I have been sarved such a trick—and I could have sworn the man warn't born that could have done it. You know, gentlemen, our four-year-old colt father bred out of the blind mare, a real soldier[1] all over, and honestly worth soldier's price, or a little more! Well, gentlemen, arter riding him only twice up and down the

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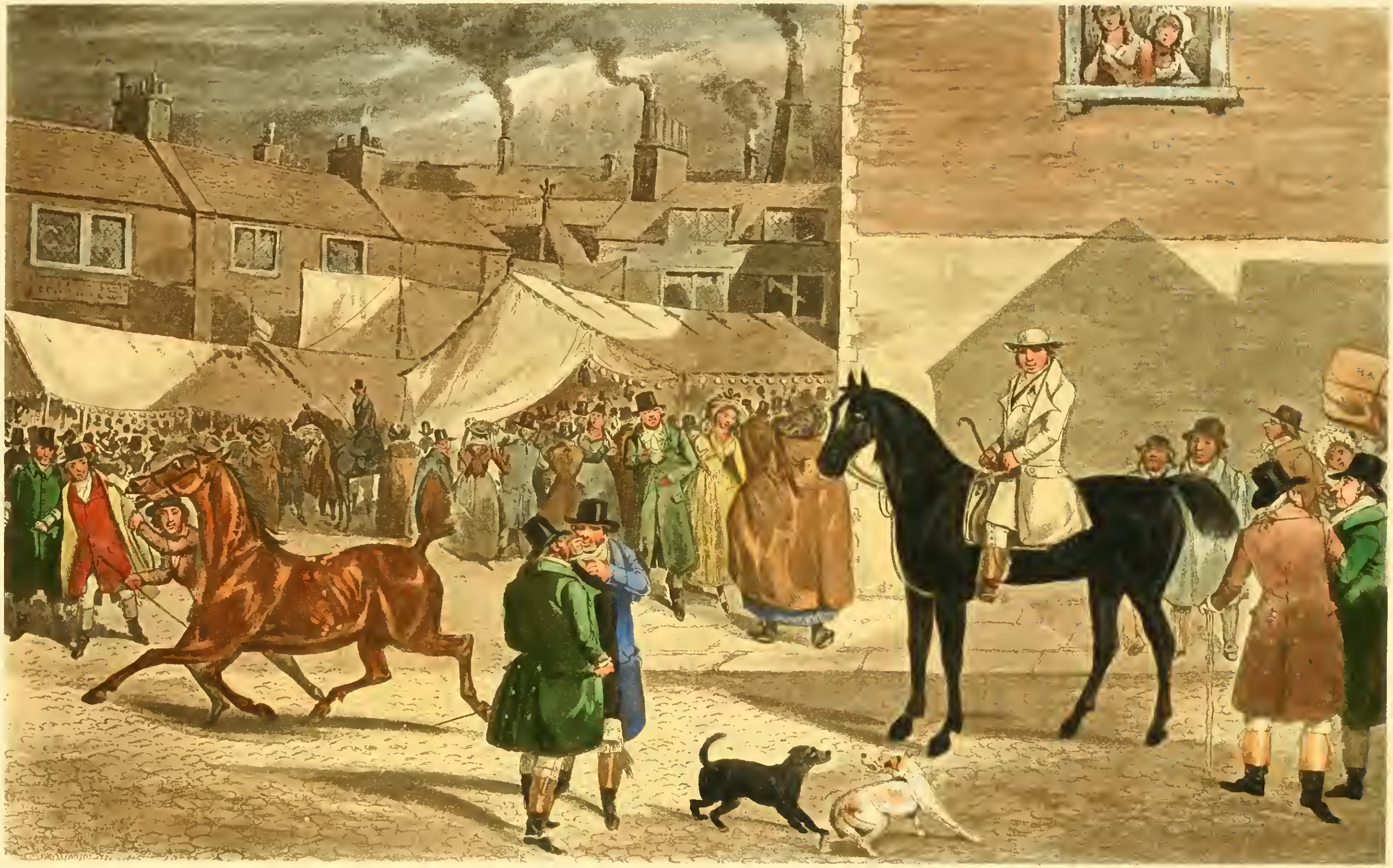
[1] In a time of war it is customary for dealers to say of a horse that he would make a good soldier—meaning a troop-horse.



"What's the price of the young nag, Miller?"

fair, as I was turning him round to go again, at the corner of New Street, up comes two as respectable-looking gentlemen as a man should see in a score, dressed in top-boots and leather breeches, and says to me, "What's the price of the young nag, miller?" "Thirty guineas," says I: you know I left a little for bating.[1] "*Sound?*" says one. "*Quiet?*" says t'other. "Lord love you, gentlemen," says I, "why, father bred him. There isn't a sounder nor a gentler creature on the face of earth, as his mother, indeed, was afore him: and he's all over a soldier, if not an officer, which father says he is." Now, Master Raby, how do you think they sarved me? "Any objection, miller?" says one of these chaps—*devils*, God forgive me, Master Raby—(here Frank could scarcely refrain from laughing)—"for me to throw my leg o'er the young one, for a hundred yards or so, and you can hold my pony the while?" "None in the least, sir," says I; "ride him, by all means; you'll say you never was on the back of a nicer nag in all your life, and by the time he has been one month in the stable of a gentleman like you, nobody wouldn't know him again." Well, Master Raby, away goes this chap on father's nag, and away rattles t'other all sorts of stuff to me, such as—how was wheat selling in this country? was father a freeholder, or some big gentleman's tenant? did we grind by wind or water? and all such questions as those. Howsomever, I soon found out that father was ground out of his horse, clean enough; for thinking it a long time before the chap who was riding him came back, I says to t'other chap—"*Where can the gentleman be?*" "I'll run up this street," said he, "and see"; and so he did, but I see'd no more of our horse from that time to this, and all I've got to show for him is this here pony (which they tells me is glandered), that the second chap left with me to hold, when he run up the street after t'other. Now, young gentlemen, if it warn't for father and mother, nobody should have seen me in the parish of Amstead again: I would have gone for a soldier, along with father's colt; for they tells me he will be at Bristol by to-morrow night, and away to the army, in a ship, before we could get there arter him.'

Here this part of the scene closed; and that which occurred on the meeting between ''cute John' and his father may be imagined by all who have read that between the Vicar of Wake-field and his son Moses, on the return of the latter from a very similar expedition; neither can much be said of the appeal to the Squire of Amstead, as a magistrate. As for granting warrants for two 'respectable-looking persons in leather breeches and top-boots,' that was quite out of the question: forasmuch as, in those days, half the buyers and sellers of horses in the fair were thus accoutred; moreover, in the case of these two rogues, it would have been doubly useless, as no doubt but the said leathers and top-boots were hidden from sight, by smock-frocks, or overalls, as soon as the wearers of them were once clear of the town; and at least three inches taken off the colt's tail, if he were not further disfigured. All that Mr. Raby could do, was to throw back ten pounds of his rent to the old miller at the next audit-day, to console him for his loss, and to caution him, in future, from making 'our John' believe there were not sharper fellows in a horse-fair than the son of a country miller.

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[1] Twenty-five was the ultimum price of troop-horses.

It was the wish of Mr. Raby that his sons should learn the art of fishing, in its higher branches, if such a term may be allowed me; but he discouraged the practice of angling with live worms for small fish, as being both cruel and unprofitable. 'The art of angling,' he would say, 'opens a wide field for the naturalist; and is a rational and contemplative amusement—cheap, and instructive withal.' Mr. Egerton, himself a fisherman, also encouraged this sport in his pupils, reminding them not only of its antiquity, but that it was not considered *infra dig.* by Homer, Virgil, and other celebrated poets, when distinguishing their heroes by their professions, business, or pursuit, to mention the 'skilful angler.'

Andrew entered heartily into this sport, and, by the instructions of the keeper, Perren, became rather a dexterous fly-fisher; he could also take good pike with his trolling-rod, generally making his bait an artificial minnow, or frog, by the advice of his amiable tutor. 'Why torment fishes or insects,' he would say, 'by impaling them alive on hooks, when inanimate objects will be equally attractive as baits? Besides, independently of the reflection cast upon angling, from the unnecessary pain inflicted, the principal art of the fisherman lies in his choice of flies. For example: do you not remember, last summer, when you accompanied me to the Grange, that Mr. Holmes, the rector, killed nearly as many

The shallows below the mill.

[illegible]

trout as the rest of the party altogether; and when grayling fishing, in October, he actually filled his basket, whilst the rest of us could scarcely take a fish? Then, again, I believe you heard the story of Mr. Musters, in the preserved waters of his friend, near Uxbridge. There was a trout of six pounds in a hole, which the keepers of the owner of the domain had long tried to take, but they had always failed in their attempts. Mr. Musters came down from London for the purpose, choosing a favourable day,—took the fish at the third throw, and gave the keepers a guinea.

'Pray, sir,' inquired Frank, 'which do you consider to be the best rivers for grayling?'

'The Dove and the Trent,' replied Mr. Egerton, 'are, I believe, about the best; and the Teme, which runs through Herefordshire and Shropshire. In this river, near Ludlow, was caught the largest grayling ever seen in England; it measured half a yard in length, and weighed four pounds six ounces, which is considered a prodigious size and weight for this species of fish. By the bye, I can tell you an anecdote relating to this river, which is highly complimentary to the pursuit of fishing, associated as it is with a love of rural scenery (in which that country abounds), and the enjoyment of the beauties of nature. The autumnal months are best suited to this stream; and it happened that General Tarleton, after having revelled in the pleasures and luxuries of a London season, retired to the village of Leintwardine, about nine miles from Ludlow, for the purpose of fishing for grayling in the Teme. He had excellent sport; and when he left the small inn at which he had sojourned for a month, he wrote the following postscript to the landlord's bill: "I voluntarily add the sum of twenty pounds to the amount of this bill; being not only an acknowledgment of its very moderate charges, but in testimony of the fact that the month which I have passed in the village of Leintwardine has been the happiest that I have hitherto passed."'

There is one practice of the fisherman in which Frank Raby was desirous to excel, and this was the dexterous throwing of the casting-net, at which Perren, the head keeper, was a proficient. Dressed in his smock-frock, then, would Frank be seen at the shallows, below the mill, in which gudgeons and perch were plenty; and he was now and then rewarded with a pike, in the deeper parts of the river, which were clear from reeds or weeds. But the casting-net is not a certain engine of destruction, as relates to large fish; its chief use is for catching what is called 'small fry,' either to stock waters with, or for baits, where live baits are used; and out of the multitude of fish which it takes, when thrown by a good hand, there is much choice to be made. But the exercise of this net is an act of much grace, when cast as it should be cast; for, although it resembles a bell in shape, whilst remaining in a quiescent state, when spread to its utmost extent it forms a complete circle. Long, then, before Frank arrived at maturity, there was not a person in the neighbourhood who could handle this net better than he could, his fustian-jacketed preceptor excepted. He was, likewise, a fair hand at a trout, and the knowledge of the flies best adapted to taking him, at various times and seasons; at the same time there was, in his estimation, somewhat of a tameness throughout the entire proceedings of the fisherman, which gave him some difficulty in determining whether he really liked it as a sport, or merely endured it as the means of beguiling a few vacant hours.

There was one reason for a difference of taste in the pastimes and pursuits which these brothers exhibited, and this was in the nature of the physical constitution of each, which seldom fails to have its effect on the intellectual one. Andrew had been a weakly child from his birth, and he was, consequently, unequal to enter into the rough and arduous pursuits which alone seemed to fascinate our hero. But the time was now arrived when both were to make their start in the world, and repair to a public school, as their father had done before them, and for which they were well prepared by Mr. Egerton. Yet here arose a difficulty, which it will be in my power to account for, as likewise to show how it was obviated.

CHAPTER IV

The hero enters upon the stage of life, and also on another stage, which, with various incidents narrated in this chapter, will be found corroborative of the adage, that—'as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined.'

I HAVE already presented to the reader the character and situation of the brother of Mr. Raby, uncle to the two boys; but it may be necessary further to observe that, having made up his mind to remain a bachelor, as more congenial to his unconquerable love of ease and quiet, as well as to his generally epicurean habits, he had settled in his own mind that Frank Raby should succeed to his fortune, which, as I have already stated, was considerable, and likely to increase rather than diminish in his hands. This being the case, it is but reasonable to suppose that he interested himself in everything relating to the formation of the character of his intended heir, who, although he rather encouraged than checked his desire to become a sportsman, he was very anxious should become a scholar, to fit him for that place in society it was his intention to have occupied himself, but which constitutional indolence put a bar to. With this view, then, he paid a visit to the Abbey, to talk over matters with his brother, respecting the future education of his nephew; it having been communicated to him, that, after the midsummer holidays, both Frank and his brother Andrew were to be sent to a public school. The result of this visit, as regarded the point in question, will be seen in the following dialogue:—

'Well, brother,' said Mr. Beaumont Raby, 'I find the boys make their *debut* in the world after midsummer: have you determined on Eton?'

'Why, as we were Etonians ourselves,' replied Mr. Raby, 'and have had no cause to repent of having been so, I see no objection to Eton; but have you yourself any?'

'None whatever, to the school. Dr. George Heath, who is at the head of it, and Dr. Goodall, the second master, are both scholars; although the first, in spite of his witty translation of the celebrated line—

'"Ille dolet verè, qui sine teste dolet," is as bare of humour as a hurdle is of flesh; and if Goodall had a little more of the stoic about him—at all events, a little more firmness—Eton would be none the worse as a school. But, as you kindly ask me the question, I candidly tell you I had rather that the two boys should not both go to the same school, and I will give you my reason. Frank, though not wanting in parts, is disposed to do as little as he can possibly help with Mr. Egerton, and I am much afraid that if he were at Eton with his brother, he would coax him into making his exercises for him, which his naturally affectionate disposition would, I am sure, induce him to do. You are aware, brother of my intentions towards Frank. I not only mean to leave him what I am possessed of, but it is my earnest wish that he should sit in Parliament, and make a figure in the world, in some other way than as a mere sportsman, which, it is evident, he is resolved to be.'

The door of the library opening at this moment, the conversation between the brothers was momentarily interrupted by the appearance of a neighbour, who was on terms of the greatest intimacy with them both. This was Mr. Freemantle, a rich London banker, who had purchased a fine property in the county, where he was beloved and respected by all for the kindness and hospitality which he displayed, as well as for the first-rate talents of his cook.

'Raby,' said the banker, 'how are you? What, Beaumont, are you here? Delighted to see you both: but didn't know you were come down, Beaumont. What news from town, eh? How could you find it in your heart to leave town at this gay time?'

'Why, you may suppose that is something extraordinary. The fact is, we are discussing the point whether Eton or Westminster school is best suited for Frank. Now, what say you?'

'Why, as to what boys may bring away in their heads from either, I don't think there is the toss-up of a guinea between the two; but, as to what they may bring away in their pockets, there is a wide difference between them. A terribly aristocratic place is that Eton school, and I'll give you a proof or two. When my nephews were there, I gave them a five-pound note on the Friday, as I passed through to visit a friend at Taplow; and on my return to town on the Monday, chanced to see one of them at Salt Hill. "Well, William," said I, "how much of the five-pound note is left?" "The five-pound note!" he replied, "why not a rap: it all went the same day; part to pay off a score for filberts and sherry; and the rest to Jem Stevens, for hack-horses and tandems." Then, how much do you think one of these chaps owed for gloves? Why, three pounds sixteen shillings! But, now I think of it, and I never mention Salt Hill that I don't think of it, I can tell you a better story than either of these, to show how little your Eton blades think of money. I had these same hopeful nephews of mine (by the way, you know they have turned out very well, both perfect gentlemen) to dine with me, on a whole holiday, at Salt Hill, and was soft enough to tell them to bring half a dozen of their friends with them. Well, of course, they did so; and a fine lot of youths they were; very highly bred, I believe, all, and the son of a duke amongst them. I gave them a good dinner, but was diverted by an incident in the middle of it. "Hand round the champagne," said I to the waiter; but Lord S—— put his hand on the top of his glass, and said, "No champagne for me; *I am a sherry man.*" Pretty well, thought I, for a lad of fourteen. However, they all delighted me by their behaviour, which was correct in every respect; but when about to rise from the table to return to Eton, I found that I had not done with them yet. "You must pouch these fellows, uncle," whispered William. "*Pouch* them," said I, "what do you mean by pouching them?" "Tipping them," was his reply. "They will consider themselves insulted if you do not." "Ah," resumed I, "now I comprehend you: and what must I give them?" "Oh!" replied James, my younger nephew, "a guinea *apiece will do.*" Here, then, was a good day's work; for what with the bill at the inn, and the *pouching*, I had not much left out of a twenty-pound note.'

'A true bill, no doubt, Freemantle,' said Mr. Raby; 'Eton, I find, is about the same as it was in my time: and your mention of Stevens, whose miserable hacks we used to ride, often at the expense of a flogging, reminds me of an anecdote of his hopeful son, Jem. When Wentworth left Eton, he was so enamoured of this aspiring blade, that he hired him as his personal servant; but he returned to his old quarters, at the expiration of three months; when he thus *accounted for himself*, as we magistrates say on the bench. "Mr. Vorth," said he, "was vell enough; indeed he vished to hedicate me, and bought vigs for me, that I might learn to cut hair, and did many kind things besides; but his walet and I couldn't agree at all. At last, however, ve had a reg'lar blow up; and finding that Mr. Vorth backed the *walet* against me, I vopped him and the walet, and here I am, once more."'

'Well,' observed Mr. Beaumont Raby, 'these are extremely amusing stories, and very characteristic of Eton; but let us return to our discussion on the question of choice between the two schools, and also hear what our friend Freemantle has to say on the subject.'

'Why, if you wish for my opinion,' replied Mr. Freemantle, 'you shall have it; but, mind ye, it will be one, perhaps, that you Eton and Oxford men—and you, in particular, Beaumont, who brought honours with you from Oxford—may not exactly admire. Scholarship, or, if you will, learning, has been rung in my ears as the *summum bonum*—the one thing necessary for man. In fact, to say of a person that he is a scholar, seems to imply every kind of superiority; and to say that he is no scholar, the reverse. Now, I confess that, after much reflection and much inquiry, I am at a loss to comprehend the mighty benefits of what is called fine scholarship. Some advantages it certainly has: but, perhaps, its disadvantages are greater than we think, and for these reasons:—It too often prevents the excursions of a vigorous understanding, by keeping it in a beaten track, the invariable practice of all great schools; it perpetuates error, by imposing received opinions upon those who, if they had thought for themselves, would have discovered truth; it divides the attention, and often fixes it on subjects which are not suited to that particular genius and turn of mind, which nature would have exerted upon some other, the object of her own choice, and with much more advantage. Neither is this all. By loading the memory, it restrains the imagination; and, by multiplying precepts, it anticipates the judgment. Give me the man whose knowledge is derived from the copious sources of his own reason; whose mind is filled with ideas that spring not from books, but from thought; whose principles are co-existent, because deduced in a regular ratiocination, and not from scraps of different systems gleaned from the works of others and huddled together without examination. Where is the scholar whose opinion can be said to be entirely his own? Or where is the genius that we wish to have trammelled by the impressions of others? Are we sure Shakespeare would have been what he was, had he been a deeply-read scholar? At all events, our public seminaries of learning do not exactly correspond with the precept delivered by the Spartan king,—"that the child should be instructed in the arts which will be useful to the man"; and if my father had had nothing to boast of but a first-class degree at one of your Universities, I should have never had the honour of being a banker's son. Nevertheless, although it is possible that a finished scholar may emerge from our schools and colleges, in total ignorance of the business and conversation of English gentlemen in the latter end of the eighteenth century, I am still ready to admit the advantages to be derived from the study of the Latin and Greek languages. They deposit, in the hands of a disciple, the keys of two valuable chests: and it is his own fault if they are afterwards lost, or laid aside.'

The morning of setting forward for school having arrived, it produced various sensations at Amstead Abbey. As for the two boys, the novelty of the thing, the thoughts of the journey, and the pocket-money, made their hearts light; but there were other hearts very differently affected, and one overpowered with its weight. This, as may be supposed, was that of the good and affectionate Lady Charlotte, who, as she could not command her tears, declined taking leave of her sons. Nor was Mr. Raby very fit to appear in their presence, although he strove to conceal what he felt. But there were two belonging to the establishment of the Abbey, whose feelings could not be controlled, and these were Dick Perren and the cook: the one absolutely bellowed from the effect of his grief at the loss of Master Francis, his young master; and the other, who, notwithstanding what she occasionally suffered from his tricks, loved him as the apple of her eye, betrayed the amiable weakness of woman, but by no means to her discredit. Her method of exhibiting it, however, was a singular one: she had taken her station at the first gate in the park, at which she knew the carriage must stop while the footman opened it, and approaching, with her face nearly enclosed in her apron, she chucked into the carriage two half-guineas, wrapped in a bit of white paper, with these words inscribed—'*God bless you both.*' And what return did she get for this silent, though not less eloquent offering to her grief? Why, Frank put his head out of the window of the carriage as it passed on, and, schoolboy-like, roared out, '*You stupid old fool!*'

The party arrived at the county town just in the nick of time. The horses were being put to the 'Balloon,' and Wilkins was coming out of the office, with his whip in one hand, his way-bill in the other, and a 'Benjamin' thrown over his left arm—all evident signs of being quite ready to start. Having walked once round his horses, and examined their coupling reins and curb chains, after the manner of those times, he addressed his young passengers, as they alighted from their father's carriage, with—

'Glad to see you, young gentlemen: proud of the honour of having you about the coach. Two insides and one out—box-seat—all right! A beautiful morning. Now, Mr. James (to the footman), be alive with the luggage, if you please: we are all ready for a start: and you know we are werry particular at *this* end, if we can't always be so at *t' other*.'

'I say, Wilkins,' said Frank, 'I shall not ride inside after we get out of the town; I shall come alongside you on the box, and put James inside with my brother.'

'Very good, sir,' replied Wilkins, 'proud to have you on the box: you'll be one of us, some day or another, Master Francis, I am quite sure; but, will your papa——?'

'Pooh!' exclaimed Frank, 'how will papa know about it?'

'Not from me, Master Francis,' resumed Wilkins, 'I never tells no tales; but you had better not come out till we get through Clifford, for the parson there is almost always at the window when the coach passes by, and he is a tattling old devil: ten to one he don't slip it out next time he dines at the Abbey. We shall stop to water at the "Black Dog," Master Francis, and then you can come on to the box.'

The coach having arrived at the 'Black Dog,' and the exchange between Francis and the footman having been completed, the following edifying conversation ensued between the master and his pupil:—

'Do you feel yourself comfortable, Master Francis?' began Mr. Wilkins—'never on a coach before, eh? Here, put a bit of my box-coat over your knees, 'twill keep off the dust from your clothes.'

'I like being on the box very much,' replied Frank, 'but how it shakes!'

'Ay, master,' said the old coachman, 'it does that, sure enough, 'specially with one who ain't used to it; they do say, they are going to put the boxes of all stage-coaches on springs, but Heaven knows when that will be—not in my time, I fear. Our people say it won't do, that we shall go to sleep upon them; but there's no danger of a man doing that now, even if he should be a bit overtaken with drink. But, Master Francis, there is a great deal of *hart* in sitting on a coach-box, as well as in driving four horses. Your body must go with the swing of the box, and let your lines (loins) be as lissom as you can. It would kill a man, in a week, to drive as far as I do, over such a road as this, if he did not do as I say.'

'You have got good horses in the coach, Wilkins,' observed Frank.

'Good creatures in natur', sir,' was that worthy's reply, 'but they haven't no chance. This here sixteen miles of ground and only one rest-horse, kills them. To be sure, master grubs them well, or they'd been dead years ago.'

'Years ago! why, how old are they?'

'Why, I was going to say, you must ask my father that question. Howsomever, I have drove three of the four, nine years, and t' other came to this coach from the "Express," the first year I drove it: I think he must be quite twenty.'

'But how fat he is!'

'Always the case with groggy ones,' observed Mr. Wilkins; 'as soon as they have filled their bellies, they are down on their bed, because they are in pain when they stand up. A foundered coach-horse, like a gouty alderman, is always fat. But this near wheeler is my *favourite* (giving him, at the moment, three tremendous stripes, with his double thong, over his back, and two over his ears, followed by a sort of rolling noise in his throat, resembling that made by gargling for a sore one); you'll see how he'll hug his collar going up Brampton-hill, at the end of this stage. He's half a team himself, but still he's an awkward chap to drive. There's some difference, sir, I can assure you, between driving well-bitted fresh horses, like your papa's, and such dead-alive bow-kickers as these are, all as shifty as a lawyer: in fact, this off-wheeler is a lawyer all over, for he'll not work at all, if he is not devilish well paid for it; and I keep a short Tommy in the boot, on purpose to pay him off. Howsomever, Master Francis, you shall try what you can do with them if you like, so shift over to my side, and I'll put the reins right in your hand.' [Here it may be observed, that the short wheel-reins being generally in use at that time, the placing the reins of four horses in the hand of a tyro was not a complex affair. The wheel-reins merely rested across the left hand, after passing between the fore and middle finger, and those of the leaders passing between the thumb and fore finger, and the fore and middle finger, were very readily distinguished from the others.]

'Now, Master Francis,' resumed old Wilkins, 'mind what you are about. Keep your wheel-horses to their collars, and your leaders will get out of their way of themselves. Now, let me see you point your leaders to the left without moving your wheel-horses. Well done, master! that will do. Now shoot out your wheelers to the right without disturbing your leaders. Ah! that's not so easily done; but it will come all in time. A man wants three hands to stir these bow-kickers, 'specially if he ain't used to them. But let me see you hit this near wheeler. Well, not much amiss, Master Francis, though something like thrashing. I fear the old horse thinks you are playing with him, for he minds you no more than a bolster does a flea-bite. Now touch up the grey mare. Ah! master, that won't do. Always hit a leader *below* the bar, or you will be for ever having a bite, but catch no fish. But now, sir, if you please, I'll take 'em in hand again down the hill, for it's a long fall, and, as I told you before, this near wheel-horse is rather given to say his prayers, if he steps on a loose stone.'

At the bottom of the hill (they were now close upon a village), Wilkins pulled up his coach, and, in an undertone, said to an outside passenger, 'Now, sir, if you please, will you get down, and walk through the town?' On his afterwards resuming his seat, at the other end of it, the dialogue thus proceeded:—

'What is the meaning of this, Wilkins?' asked Frank; 'why not let that passenger ride through the town?—you are not heavily loaded.' 'Why, sir,' replied Wilkins, 'between you and me, I means to swallow that gentleman to-night.'

'Swallow him!—what the deuce do you mean?'

'Why, Master Francis, I don't mind telling you, because all the servants at the Abbey says that you are not one of the wide-in-the-mouth sort, no tale-teller. We poor coachmen, you know, sir, *must live*: that is to say, we must make tongue and buckle meet at the end of the year, or we gets into trouble. Now, this can't be done for only ten shillings a week on such a dull road as this, besides what we kicks the passengers for, without a bit of shouldering. This gentleman is what we call a shoulder-stick, and, instead of his fare going to the proprietors of the coach, it finds its way into my short pocket.'

'And do you never get found out?'

'Sometimes. I lost one good sarvice, owing to shouldering a sodger. Made a vow, Master Francis, never to shoulder another sodger, for a proprietor can see him a mile off. No more cocked-hats and feathers, said I, for me, except they are on the bill, and then they ain't worth having.'

Just at this moment the 'Balloon' coach, *down*, appeared in sight; and, on both coaches being pulled up alongside each other, the following somewhat symbolical sentences were interchanged.

'How do, Joe?'

'How do, William?'

'*Anything said?*'

'No; but I thinks the young one's *fly*.'

'Good day, Joe; there's three in and two out, booked for you to-morrow.'

But we must here close this portion of our history. Let it suffice to say, that Frank got another lesson from Wilkins, with some hints which he never forgot: but on the approach of night, resumed his inside place, and, in due time, found himself safe in London, under the roof of his uncle, who was delighted at the thought of his nephew making such a promising start in the world, with the assurance that, in after-life, he would have the means of supporting both the rank and character of a gentleman.

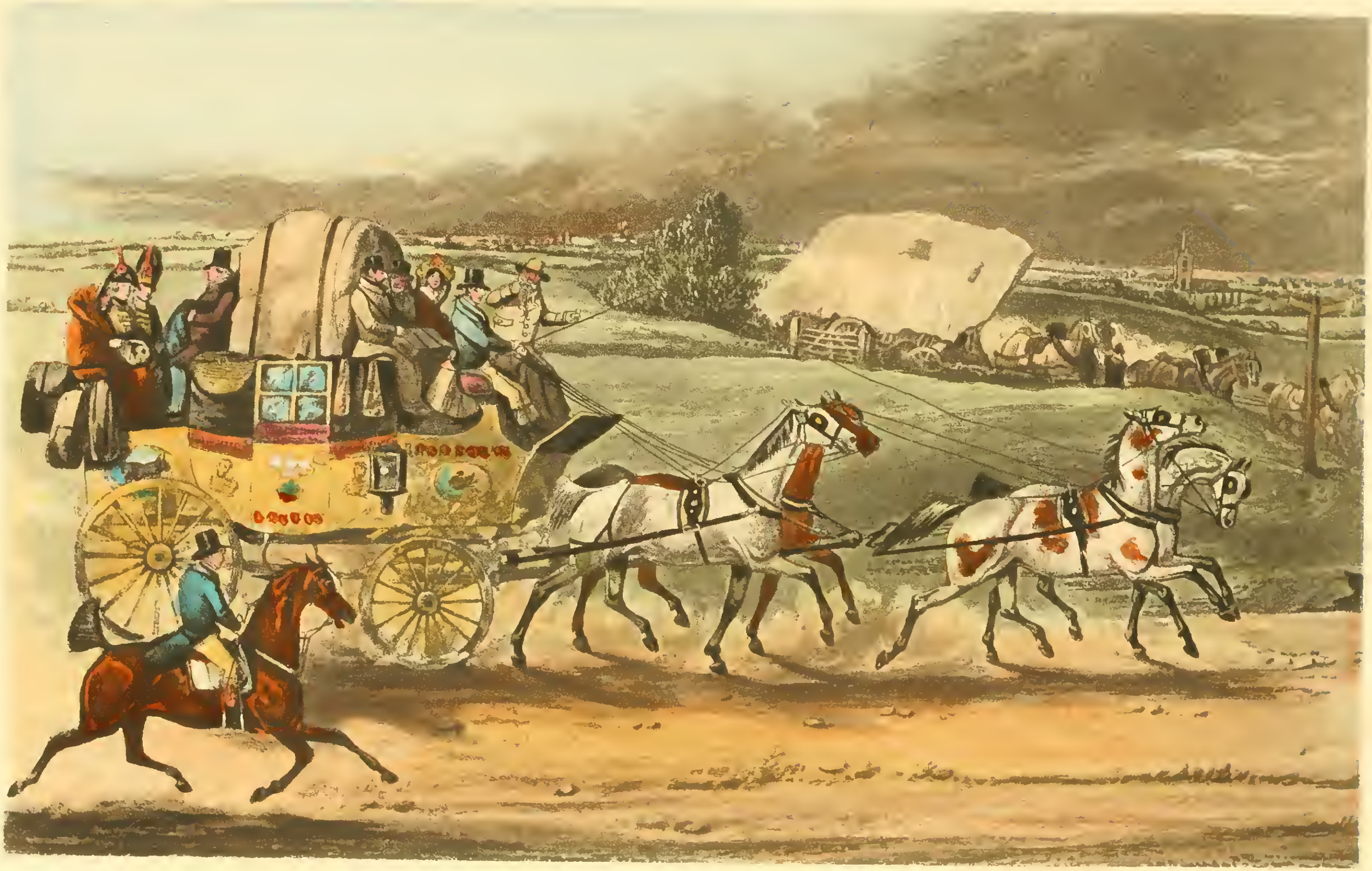
It was three years since the young Rabys had been in London, a period at that early age well-nigh long enough to obliterate all recollection of what it had appeared to be. Three days, however, having been allowed them to see what was best worth seeing in their eyes, they made the most of their time, nearly exhausting the energies of their uncle, who made no small sacrifice in exerting them. And there was one place which he had believed nothing could have ever induced him to visit again, being so very little to his taste, and that was Tattersall's.

'Do let us go to Tattersall's,' said Frank to his uncle, on the Monday; 'I should so like to see all the fine horses he sells; besides which, I dare say, we shall meet with some of papa's friends.'

To Tattersall's then they went, and witnessed a curious scene. The impatience of a schoolboy is proverbial; and that of Frank Raby for the scene of action having got the better of the tardy motions of his uncle, the party found themselves at 'the Corner' at least an hour and a half sooner than they need have been, a period of the day when the auctioneer is employed in offering for sale a few low-priced hacks, as a sort of prelude to the more important scene which is to follow, when the aristocratic part of the audience assembles. This, however, passed unnoticed by the uncle, who was no horse man, but not so by Frank Raby. 'What! uncle,' says he, 'is this the famous Tattersall's that I have heard Sir John Inkleton and my father talk so much of?—where Sir John sold eight grey coach horses, not warranted sound, for £800! Why, I did not see a worse set of rips at our Whitsun fair!'

'Rips to be sure they are,' said an old friend of his father and uncle, who stepped out of the crowd at the moment, just in time to hear the remark, 'yet I have bid seventeen pounds for one of them, a very useful-looking pony. But let me shake you all by the hand. Raby, glad to see you. Lads, who would have thought of seeing you in London?—on your road to Eton, I suppose; and how did you leave them all at the Abbey?—not coming to town this season, I fear.'

'But, Mr. Verner,' said Frank, interrupting him, 'why don't you buy the "useful-looking pony"? he must be cheap at that money, and I hear Tattersall now crying out—"Going at eighteen pounds."' 'Well, Frank,' replied Mr. Verner, 'to oblige you, I'll go another pound; you would like to have to say, when you write home, that you saw me buy a horse at Tattersall's': so catching the auctioneer's eye, and tipping him a wink, down went the hammer, with—'For you, Mr. Verner, I believe'; followed by a nod of assent from his customer.



"The Prince of Wales,"
Birmingham coach of the olden time.

Now, were it not for the well-known rapidity with which the Messrs. Tattersall dispose of the commencement of their sales, to make way for more business-like proceedings, it might be difficult to reconcile or account for the following fact, though fact it surely be.

'Pray, sir,' said a countrified-looking man to Mr. Verner, in about ten minutes after the purchase had been made, and as all the party were on the road to the large stable, to which they supposed the 'useful-looking pony' was returned till claimed—'have ye got a mon here to take away the *cow*, or must she 'bide where she is to-night?' 'The cow!' exclaimed Mr. Verner, 'what cow?'

'Why,' resumed the countryman, 'the nice black Alderney, Mr. Tattersall knocked down to ye for eighteen pounds; a better creature for milk never had a pail put under her.'

The case was exactly this: 'the useful-looking pony' had been disposed of, during the salutation between Mr. Verner and his friends, and the Alderney cow had been the next lot brought up. She was going for seventeen pounds, but for the exchange of the wink and the nod just in the nick of time, which consigned her to the possession of Mr. Verner.

The evening preceding the day on which the young Rabys were to repair to Eton, his uncle was addressed by Francis with — 'By what coach do we go to Eton, to-morrow, uncle?'

'By the Windsor and Eton "True Blue," of course; it will put you down at your dame's door. But what makes you ask the question?'

'Why,' resumed Frank, 'Sir John Inkleton particularly wished us to go by the Birmingham "Prince of Wales" coach, which would put us down at Slough, where it changes horses, and we should only have a mile to walk.'

'But your luggage,' observed Mr. Raby, 'what is to become of that?'

'Oh!' continued Frank, 'Sir John said that old Baldwin, who keeps the "Crown," at Slough, on our mentioning his name to him, would send our luggage to Eton in a cart.'

There must be some motive for all this, thought the uncle: something more than meets the ear. 'Come, tell me at once, Francis, what is the reason for your wishing to go by that Birmingham coach?'

'Why, to tell you the truth, uncle,' answered Francis, 'Sir John told me I should see the famous Jack Bailey, who drives it, and who taught him to drive four horses, when he was at Eton.'

'Well, Frank,' continued the uncle, 'I see no great harm in this request of yours; but, as Sir John was an Etonian himself, did he recommend nothing to your notice that might be more serviceable to you than a Birmingham coachman?'

'He didn't say much about anything else,' replied Frank, 'except that, when I got old enough, and wanted a good horse or a tandem, on a whole holiday, he would write a line to recommend me to Stevens, who used to let him have some good ones.'

'Black Monday' having at length arrived, Frank and his brother were placed on the front roof seat of the 'Prince of Wales' coach, the footman having been despatched by the Windsor and Eton 'True Blue' with the luggage.

On descending from the coach at Slough, Frank having slipped half a crown into Jack Bailey's hands, over and above what his brother had given him when he paid the fare, shortly arrived at his 'agreeable seat in Bucks,' as he used afterwards to call Eton school, where their tutor having soon found that his elder pupil had looked into Ovid and Virgil, and had not looked into them in vain, recommended his being placed in the middle remove of the fourth form, and then proceeded to examine the pretensions of our hero. Finding him all but innocent of the Greek tongue, his location was soon determined upon. On his informing his tutor, however, that he had begun making nonsense verses, a page of 'Cæsar's Commentaries' was put before him, when he set to work much in the same manner that the young aspirant in anatomy does, when he anticipates phlebotomising, by opening the veins of full-grown cabbages.

There is not, perhaps, in the whole course of man's life, a more remarkable change than the removal of the child, from the luxury and freedom of a wealthy home, to the frugal diet and strict subordination of a public school: from the tenderness of parents, and the obsequiousness of servants, to the rude and boisterous familiarity of equals, the tyranny of seniors, and, too often, the rod of a cruel and capricious pedagogue. These hardships, however, are beneficial: if they do not absolutely steel the mind and body against the assaults of fortune, they turn to a good account. They produce an equilibrium in a large body of youths, of various pedigrees, distinctions, and expectations, and prevent the assumption of those imaginary perfections which swell the hearts of men, and still more of boys, to the great annoyance of their associates. Nevertheless, the best nature does not yield to chastening and buffeting without some degree of impatience; and it is to be feared that the sufferings of the generality of boys, at very large schools, in the lower classes of it especially, are greater than commonly imagined. At all events, the first week at Eton is a serious trial to the nerves of a shy or home-sick boy; a thousand questions are asked, some of them rather difficult to be answered; answered they must be, or a slap in the face is the consequence. The Rabys, however, made their way among the crowd, and partly for these reasons:—Their name was known as aristocratic, and they were called 'devilish good-looking fellows';—Francis, especially, who had a certain 'knowing look' about him, according to the language of those days, which soon made an impression: as did also the knowledge of his father being a master of hounds, and of his having brought letters of introduction to Stevens and Jack Bailey, from the well-known Sir John Inkleton, who was considered an ornament to Eton school. Still, all this did not serve him as an indemnity from some of the tricks commonly played off on new-comers, in these licentious days.

It was the saying of a Spartan king that—'Boys should be introduced to the arts which will be useful to them when they become men.' Independently of the business of the school, this maxim has always been acted upon at Eton, in the various popular pastimes. Amongst the foremost of these, is the management of the boat, which soon became a favourite one of our hero, whose sculling was excelled by none at the expiration of his third year. He was likewise good at cricket, quoits, backsword playing, and other manly games; and above all at football, inasmuch as few could beat him at kicking shins. Andrew was also a good cricketer; and by his mild, unassuming manners, together with the reputation he acquired as a scholar, he soon became as popular as his brother in the society in which he moved.

It is not my intention to follow the Rabys through all the grades of the school: it is sufficient to say that they both reached the fifth form with credit to themselves, as well as to those who instructed them, and proceeded, in due time, to Christchurch College, Oxford, although with somewhat different views; a first-class degree being the grand object with Andrew; a forward place with the foxhounds, the principal desideratum of Francis—the honour of being considered a good fellow in the college, and over the mahogany, standing next on his list of what he considered accomplishments.

CHAPTER V

Christmas at the seat of 'a fine old English gentleman,' with its appropriate accompaniments—good company, good cheer, and good sport.

THE month of December, despite of frost and snow, is a cheerful month in the house of a country gentleman whose means are large, and consequently Christmas and its festivities were well kept up at the Abbey. Even customs of monkish introduction were observed, and the interior of the mansion was decorated with holly branches, from the fine mirrors in the saloons, to the stewpans and crockery in the kitchen. Neither was the mistletoe forgotten, under the magic shade of which not a female in the establishment, from the governess to the kitchen-maid, escaped the usual and generally repeated salutation of Frank Raby in this season of licence and conviviality, his brother Andrew taking a part in the scene, but selecting a chosen few.

Ale had been brewed for the occasion, and there was little limit to the drawing of it, short of actual abuse; it being the wish of Mr. Raby that the hearts of his dependants should be gladdened, in proportion to his means of gladdening them, at this festive season.

It is *now* a commonplace observation, 'How little remains that poverty and innocence can partake of'; and we have legislators who, if they could, would make that little less; but, happily for the people, such was not the case in the times to which I allude. The dance round the maypole, on May-day, or on the village green, at Whitsuntide,—the harvest-home supper, the bonfires of November, and the good cheer of Christmas, were looked for and enjoyed as surely as the seasons arrived, and the contributions to these indulgences, from all the family at the Abbey, were at all times liberal.

The sirloins of beef, the mince-pies, and plum-puddings, the wine and ale, eaten and drunk under its roof, were in perfect keeping with its baronial exterior; and the clothing and fuel, furnished to the neighbouring poor under the management of Lady Charlotte Raby, were still more abundant.

The meeting between Frank Raby and his father's huntsman was truly characteristic of both. It is not my intention here, however, to give a second edition of Frank's appearance with his father's harriers in the field; although he was complimented, by the huntsman, on the improvement in his hand and nerve, and the judicious remarks he made on some of the leading hounds; but we will proceed at once to his *début* with the foxhounds.

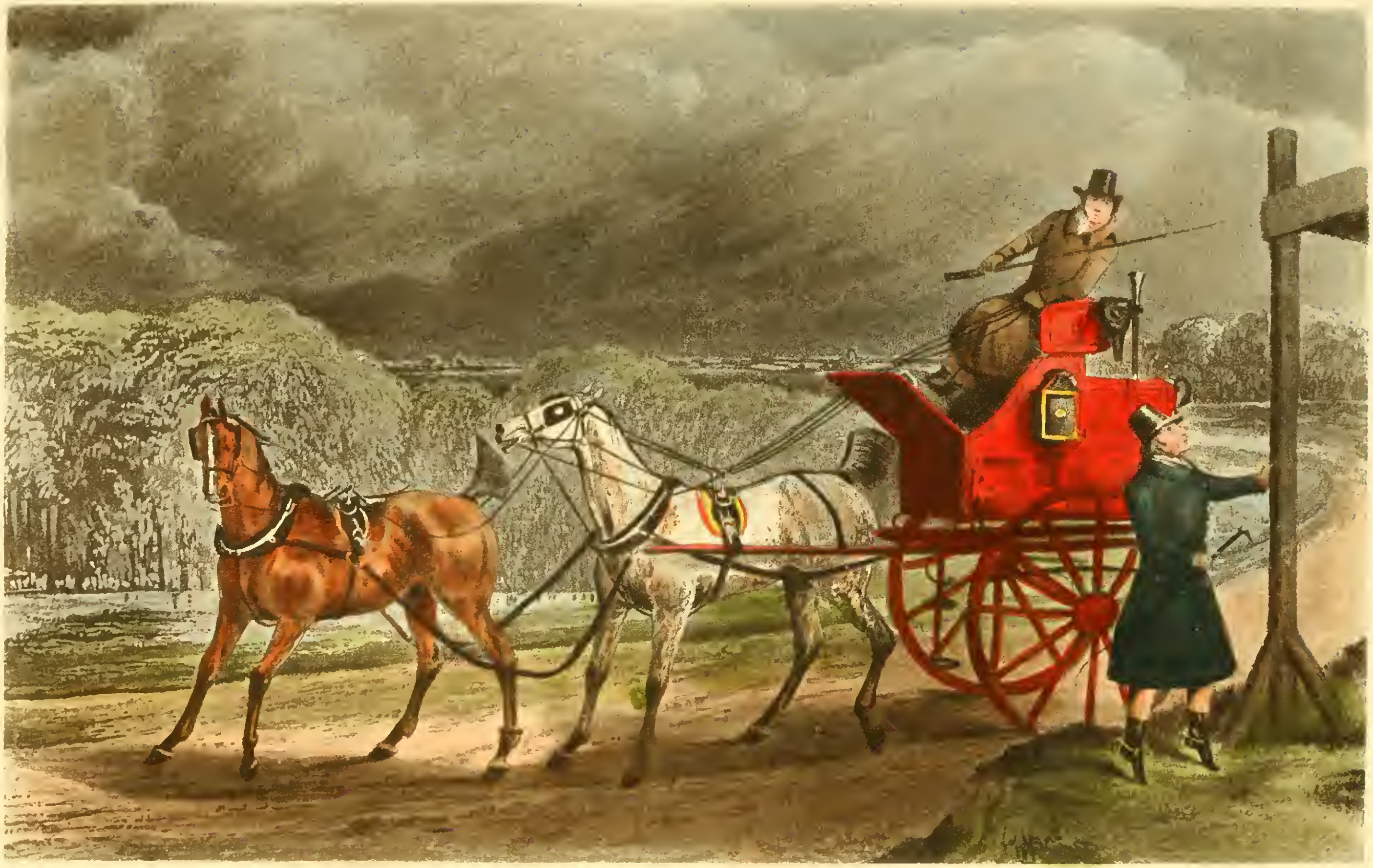
The morning was cloudy and still, looking like a hunting morning, and the family had all assembled in the breakfast-room, when Sir John made his appearance, the Abbey being only a mile or two out of the road that led to the appointed cover. 'Well, Inkleton,' said Mr. Raby, after the usual salutations had passed, and pointing to his son Francis, who was clad in a green hunting-coat, and a pair of leather breeches made expressly for the purpose, 'here is the happiest fellow, this day, in our own country, and, very probably, in the next to it. Andrew says, he has not closed his eyes since three o'clock this morning, praying heartily for daylight. I am sorry I cannot accompany you to the field, as I must attend the bench to-day, but I have ordered Dick, the huntsman, to do so, and take the young fox-hunter under his care.'

'There is no necessity for that,' replied Sir John; 'one of my hunters having been amiss, is much in want of work, and I have ordered Preston to be at the cover, and he will do all that is required, in piloting Frank; and you know old Preston is to be depended on.'

'*When the hounds find?*' exclaimed Lady Charlotte, with some expression of doubt on her countenance.

'As steady as old Time, I assure you, Lady Charlotte,' replied Sir John; 'besides, he is a perfect old woman across a country, and has too great a regard for his own neck, to run any risks of breaking Frank's.'

Breakfast concluded, Frank having fed no better than he slept, Sir John's cover-hack was announced as being at the door, and he and his happy companion set forward on their road to Bransford-wood; and thus they discoursed on their way:—



"H. for Windsor; go along, Bob!"

'Well, Frank,' said Sir John, 'how did you get on at Eton? I heard of your performances on the "Balloon" coach. Mitchell also wrote me word that Jack Bailey speaks well of you.'

'Oh, Eton's well enough out of school hours, Sir John,' replied Frank; 'lots of fun going on then. I liked Stevens very much indeed; he never refused me a tandem, and he ticked me for a terrier at once, the best you ever saw; he has drawn three badgers, and killed three cats, since I have had him. I only gave two guineas for him, and I have brought him down to have a breed between Myrtle and him. But everybody seems to like Jack Bailey; I have had several lessons of him.'

'That's right,' said Sir John; 'there's nothing like being well "*nitiated*" in road-work; and pray what was your favourite road, when you went out in Stevens's tandem?'

'Oh,' replied Frank, 'sometimes one, sometimes another; but I'll tell you a good story about what happened a fortnight back. Two fifth-form fellows went in a tandem to Egham, and dined at the "Running Horse." They drank too much wine, and, by taking a wrong turn, lost themselves in Windsor Great Park. Seeing a finger-post, however, the one that was not driving got out of the gig to read it, when, after a pause—for I suppose he could not see very clearly—he called out, "*H for Windsor*; all right, go along, Bob!" They came too late for absence, and got a devil of a flogging the next day; but "*H for Windsor; go along, Bob!*" has been a kind of watchword at Eton ever since.'

'Capital!' exclaimed Sir John. 'I remember a joke, when I was there, which will never be forgotten. The fellows had all red coats made purposely for the Montem; and when they had to pass in procession before old George III., a lad named Ripston appeared in one big enough for a full-grown man, with skirts down to his heels, and great silver buttons, with a fox running engraved upon them. Old Heath was outrageous, and called him up to him, which being observed by "Old Nobbs," as we called the king, he asked the Doctor who the boy was? On hearing the name, his Majesty good-humouredly exclaimed, "Oh, Doctor, leave him alone; *I know his breed.*" The fact was, he was the son of a sporting baronet, a master of foxhounds, and he had had the coat made large enough to fit an old huntsman of his father's, then past work. But here are the hounds; we are just in time; and, by the number of horses at the cover-side, it appears as if we should have a large field. You and old Preston must take care you are not ridden over at the start. And there is the master of the pack, God bless him! a better sportsman never cheered hound; and when you come to know what foxhounds are, you will say he knows how to breed them. In fact, taking them for size and shape, there is not such a pack, this day, in England; and if we live long enough, we shall hear of their blood in every kennel in the land. But, Frank, let me have a word or two with you before we get to the cover. We are sure to find a fox, and, there is reason to believe, a good one; I shall, therefore, tell Preston what to do with you. If he goes *down wind* when first he breaks, his point will be Blackthorns. In this case, I shall tell Preston that, if he takes you down the turnpike-road about 200 yards, and then turns short to the left, he will find a line of gates, that will lead you straight to the wood, where, probably, he may hang a little. Should he go *up wind*, Roystone will be his point, a very stiff country to begin with, and the Stark brook, to a certainty. Preston will here make for either the mill, to the left, or the bridge at Elwel, to the right; for *you* must not have the Stark, if you mean to return alive to the Abbey: it is wide and deep, and the banks are very soft. However, you will be in good company, for not more than one in ten of the field will have the Stark at all.'

The greeting between Sir John and the master of the pack was, as usual, kind and cheering. 'Glad to see you, Sir John,' said the master, 'you always bring us luck.'

'Glad to hear you say so,' replied the baronet; 'we certainly have had a succession of fine runs lately, thanks to your excellent hounds, and the way in which they are hunted. But I have brought you something more to-day; I have brought you a young sportsman, of no small promise, who has the good taste, even at his early age, to prefer foxhounds to harriers. I hope we shall enter him well to-day to a good run, and blood him at the end of it.'

'Glad to see you, sir,' said Mr. Warde (for of him and his hounds have I been speaking, and who was then in the zenith of his glory, and hunting one of the many countries which he hunted in his time); 'although your father is no fox-hunter, I have a great regard for him as a conspicuous sportsman in his line, and a stanch preserver of foxes; and it was only last night that we drank his health in that honourable capacity. You have a clever little mare under you, and I hope we shall find out, before night, whether your father's old oats are as good as his new were. *I* was entered to hounds before I was your age, and I mean to stick to them as long as I can sit in my saddle. Now, Bob,'[1] to the huntsman, 'throw your darlings into cover; and,' addressing himself to Frank Raby, 'mind this, young gentleman—if you hear a hound speak in the cover, you may bet all the money you like that it is to a fox. *Every tongue* is a *fox* with my hounds, as I suppose every tongue is a hare with Mr. Raby's harriers.'

Scarcely had the pack spread themselves, right and left, in the wood, than Samson was observed lashing his sides with his stern, and Champion rushed through the strong brushwood to join noses, as much as to say, has *the villain been this road in the night?* 'Have at him, Samson,' said Mr. Warde; 'look about you, Bob, we shall find him in five minutes.' 'And Champion also says so,' returned the huntsman, 'and he never told a lie in his life.'

But the 'villain' did not wait to be found. The drag grew warmer and warmer as the hounds drew onward, and the deep tones of such of them as were equal to owning a scent at least eight hours old, being audible down wind, even in the deep recesses of the cover, away went as fine a dog-fox as ever wore a brush, and then the scene became glorious. The crash, when the body of the pack got together; the shouting of the foot people in the rides; the blasts of the horns; and the hallooing of the horsemen—some eager to assist in getting the hounds to their game, others mad to get a start;—all this had a thrilling effect on our young sportsman; but there was no time for looking about; the hounds were on good terms with their fox—their heads up, and their sterns down—and a fine grass country before them.

The fence out of the wood was an awkward one; it was a low, but stiff, gate, which, of itself, would have been nothing; but an open drain, under repair, was in front of it, on the rising side, which made the rider and his horse look about them. Sir John led the way, followed by three more, when Frank cleared it, with a good yard to spare, sticking to his horse as tightly as if he had been strapped to his saddle; and this was, without doubt, the happiest moment of his existence. He had taken a dangerous leap, which several of the field declined; he saw a fine country before him, with his friend in the same field with the hounds, and only one field in advance of himself:—'I'll go till I fall,' said he to himself, and strictly did he keep his word. Fence after fence was cleared by him, in the company of a chosen few; but, as yet, he had not been observed by Sir John Inkleton. An accidental occurrence discovered him. The fence exactly in Sir John's line being impracticable from its height and strength, he was obliged to diverge to his right, to one corner of the field, where the generality of fences are practicable; when, sailing away on the headland, he espied Frank Raby approaching. There was no time for words, the chase being forward at the moment, and some lost time to be made up; so putting Petronius at some rails, he was landed in the next field, with the hounds in the one beyond it. When in the act of clearing these rails, however, he saw under him a ditch, of enormous depth and breadth, and, fearing that Frank's mare might not be equal to it, he waved his hand to him, as a signal not to attempt it. The signal was made in vain; Frank rode at it, and cleared it, with only the momentary loss of a stirrup. Sir John began to feel alarm. 'What will Mr. Raby—what will Lady Charlotte say to me,' muttered he to himself, 'if this boy meets with an accident? Still, what is to be done? I cannot lose my place with the hounds; and I doubt whether anything I may say to him will stop him.'

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[1] Robert Forfeit, who then hunted Mr. Warde's hounds.

Onward they went, over a very deep vale, with a breast-high scent, taking fences high and stiff, and many of the field shaken off. At length they approached the Stark, according to Sir John's prediction; and it was apparent to those who knew the country for some time before they came close to it, by the large willow-trees on its banks, whose flourishing condition showed that they were luxuriating in the soil which best suits them—a black bog.

'Now what is to be done here?' said Sir John, once more, to himself; and he had the lead of the field at the time. '*I* will have it just where yonder blackthorn-bush is growing on the bank, and that is sure to be the soundest part, in my view: but Frank will not be up to that trick. I'll wave my hand to him, not to attempt it. DON'T COME, DON'T COME!' roared the baronet: 'you'll be in if you do': and Frank was not out of hearing at the time; but he might as well have made such a request to the waves at the flood of a spring-tide, and at it he gallantly went. The trick of the blackthorn-bush, however, was beyond Frank's experience in the art of riding to hounds: so putting his mare to the left of it, where the ground was rotten and tender, she fell on her head, on alighting—although she cleared the water—and gave him an easy fall.

'Bravo, by the heavens!' exclaimed Sir John; 'he is up again, and no harm done; what a rider will that lad make!'

In the next field but three, the hounds came to a check, when an *éclaircissement* took place.

'Why, Frank,' said the baronet, 'you are a very pretty fellow; what have you done with old Preston, on Skylark?'

'Oh,' replied Frank, 'I have not seen him since the hounds left the wood. I saw *you* turn down the left-hand riding, and, as I thought I heard the hounds turn that way too, I followed you.'

'But, Frank,' inquired Sir John earnestly, 'are you sure you are not hurt, for you got a devil of a roll at the Stark?'

'Not a bit,' answered Frank; 'it was not the mare's fault, for she cleared the water well.'

'Yes, Frank,' continued Sir John, 'she fell from the want of a little more support than you could give her when she landed in that soft ground, almost a bog. But, upon my word, you must not ride yet at such places as you have in this run, or you will break your neck some day. And the new leathers, what a pickle they are in, and how they will tell tales when you get home! Lady Charlotte will——' 'Oh!' exclaimed Frank, 'they will know nothing about it; they shall not see me till I am dressed for dinner.'

At this moment the hounds hit off their fox, and went on, but not at best pace. In fact, they were brought to slow hunting, at which Mr. Warde's hounds ever have been so conspicuous; and the attention of Frank was riveted to them.

At the end of an hour and thirty-five minutes, the scent mending towards the finish, and the hounds running from scent to view, the fox was in Bob Forfeit's hand, and his brush given to Frank Raby by Mr. Warde himself, who was delighted at the sight of so promising a young sportsman in his country; indeed, he honoured him with peculiar notice.

Sir John being engaged to dine that day at the Abbey, Frank and himself proceeded homeward together, but not a word could be heard of 'old Preston,' nor, indeed, of a good many more of the field, who had been stopped by the Stark brook.

In the course of the evening, the health of Mr. Warde being drunk, himself and his hounds became the topics of conversation, and thus did Sir John Inkleton speak of them:—

'It may be presumptuous, perhaps, in me,' said this sporting and gentlemanlike young baronet, 'to give a decided opinion of a pack of foxhounds, it being evident that my experience has been chiefly confined to those I hunted with when at Oxford, and very good they were. Still, there is something in the character of Warde's hounds which strikes the eye, and fixes the attention of even a common and inexperienced observer, previously to seeing them at work, as being *animals* superior of their kind, as respects shape and power. Their style of hunting is equal to their high form; and as you masters of harriers,' addressing himself here to Mr. Raby, 'pride yourselves on overcoming difficulties in chase, and *hunting your game to death*, under the most unfavourable circumstances, I wish you had been with us to-day. There were many obstacles in our way:—First, the scent was excellent in the burst, because the fox ran straight, and he had not too much the start of us. Secondly, the country was excellent, until after we crossed the Stark, when a change of soil occurred, which is much against hounds in chase. Thirdly, we were twice brought to check by sheep, which, having a good fox on foot, threw us again behind. Then, to crown all, we had rather an unusual occurrence in that country—four fallows to cross in succession, which required the most patient hunting to enable us to hold on.

'The finish, however, was a glorious one. Bothered by the thirty-five minutes' burst, and a good hour's close hunting afterwards, the fox tried the earths at Hamden Wood, and finding them shut, laid himself down in the cover, and broke before the pack in view, having been beautifully hunted to his point. In the space of thirteen minutes, as fast as foot could fall, we turned him up in the open, as your son Frank can attest.'

Here Mr. Raby looked at his son, evidently with feelings of satisfaction, but deemed it prudent not to hazard a word; and Sir John proceeded with his remarks.

'Then look at Mr. Warde himself. Putting the sportsman out of the question, what a true specimen he is of the old English gentleman. How amusing is his conversation; how playful his wit; how manly his exterior; and yet, how polished are his manners when in contact with polished society! How unfortunate it is that he is so heavy; for horses can scarcely be found to carry him well up to his hounds, over this very deep country.'

'Was Henry Warde out to-day?' inquired Mr. Raby.

'He was,' replied Sir John; 'he rode his famous horse, Star, for which, although a roarer, he has refused the immense price of 600 guineas. It is the only instance, I believe, on record, of a horse, with that defect, being esteemed so valuable as a hunter.'

'I conclude,' continued Mr. Raby, 'that you often visit the head-quarters of Mr. Warde's hunt?'

'Why,' answered Sir John, 'they lie rather wide of me; but I am occasionally induced to do so by the pleasant society I meet with. Then, again, wherever John Warde is, there is sure to be mirth and fun, and the living is very good at the club. Indeed, he told me this morning, in his usual droll style, that "*everything there was very good but the reckoning.*"'

'Ah! ah!' observed Mr. Raby, 'that is John Warde to a T; there is a gaiety of heart and lightness of spirit about him, which I have never found to the same extent in any other man; and it adds much to his popularity, that he has a joke ready at hand for every one. But it is not the reckoning at a hunting-club that can hurt either Warde or you. I do not know a better manager than he is; and as for yourself, Inkleton, if you steer clear of that accursed vice, gambling, you have enough for your enjoyment of all the fun this world can afford you. Neither your hunting, nor your coaching, nor your housekeeping, good as it is, can hurt you. You will, I am sure, pardon this remark from a man much older than yourself, and one who entertains for you a sincere regard, not only on your own account, but as the son of a valued friend.'

'No fear,' replied Sir John; 'I never lost £100 at any game in my life; and as I know not one of my friends or acquaintance that is a gainer, but many who are losers by gambling, I mean to steer clear of it. In fact, I detest your professed gamesters; their hearts are as hard as stones, and as cold too; and they would rob their own brothers if they could.'

On the following morning Sir John took his departure from the Abbey, but not without having obtained a promise from Frank, to visit him before he went to Oxford.

CHAPTER VI

College life, with some sketches of men and manners at Oxford, in the latter part of the last century—Bibury Meeting in its palmy days.

Having assumed the manly gown, we now find the young Rabys at the University of Oxford—celebrated for making gentlemen as well as scholars: one of the two great luminaries of the intellectual world; and, despite of the cavils against it, one of the brightest jewels in the British crown. We find them occupying handsome rooms in Peckwater, gentlemen-commoners on the books, and with an allowance of £600 per annum to each for their expenses, it being the wish of their father, and also of their uncle, who contributed towards it, that they should not only make a respectable figure in the University, but that they should have no cause for having demands upon them when they left it. Their establishments were suitable to their means. Andrew contented himself with two saddle-horses, passing under the denomination of *hacks*, and consigned to the care of Seckham, the livery-stable keeper, reserving the entire use of his servant for his own personal wants; whereas Frank had his two hunters and his hack in a private stable of his own, and looked after by an experienced man, who had been brought up, under Spencer, in the hunting stables at the Abbey.

And now let me introduce to the reader my hero's college friend, Hargrave. He was the son of a London merchant, educated at Rugby, and therefore totally unknown to Frank Raby previously to their meeting at Christchurch. But they were kindred spirits, and, according with the vulgar phrase, 'soon took to each other.' And there was some similarity in their personal appearance, at least in their personal character. So far from there being anything of the Andrygones about them — the term *dandy* was unknown in those days, and it would be well that it had never been called into use: they were plain and rather peculiar in their dress, somewhat approaching to the contrary extreme, with the exception of not losing sight of cleanliness, and what is called neatness in their dress and appointments. In fact, their appearance was gentlemanlike and sportsmanlike at the same time—not an every-day combination at that period; and before the end of the second term they were pointed at, when together in the streets, as the two best horsemen in the University. Hargrave's stud consisted but of two thoroughly accomplished hunters; and, like Frank Raby, he had them, under his own lock and key, in one of the quietest lanes in the town. Moreover, his judgment was considered so good in everything relating to hunting, as well as in the management of his horses, that he was generally appealed to as an authority on all disputed points amongst the Nimrods of the University—at all events, amongst those with whom he was in any way associated.

And how happened it that Hargrave, the son of a London merchant, should have become so accomplished in field sports—for he was an excellent shot, as well as initiated to the noble science of the chase? The question is easily replied to. His father, who was himself a sportsman, had a seat and estate in Essex, and had entered him when young to hounds, and to those of one of the best and most zealous sportsmen of his own or any other days — the renowned Mr. Charles Newman. Again, the country hunted by him was one likely to make a man both a sportsman and a horseman, being full of large covers, very strongly fenced, and noted for the stoutness of its foxes. At an early age, however, few went better over it than young Hargrave did, on a small thorough-bred horse, which went by the name of *The Phenomenon*; and he was looked upon in the neighbourhood as likely to shine, at some future period, in a better country than Essex, although famous for the stoutness of its foxes.

From what has been said of Hargrave, it is scarcely necessary to state that he was acquainted with all the sporting characters, noble and ignoble, Oxford then could boast of, and that, by virtue of his seniority in the University, he had the honour of introducing them to Frank Raby. Amongst these was a very celebrated character whose name was Will Stuart, and of whom a short notice must be taken. He was, in the first place, one of the handsomest fellows in the country; of robust form withal; and declared by himself, and very generally believed, to be descended somehow from the royal house of Stuart. But his occupations could scarcely be called royal—at all events, not in the modern acceptation of that word. He was a deer-stealer, a dog-stealer, a pond-robber, and a poacher in all ways, from a pheasant to a jack-snipe; in fact, he would accommodate his employers in any way, provided they paid him well. But Stuart's *forte* lay in the difficult art of persuasion, of which the following is one rather remarkable example:—

'Won't you buy this capital dog of me?' said he to a young man who told him he considered him too dear by at least two guineas.

'Not at that price,' replied the young man.

'Then,' resumed Billy, 'you consider two guineas an object when the "*maximum* of excellence" is to be obtained, as you gentlemen calls it. Now, when you comes to take your degree, I'll tell you what they'll say to you: they'll tell you, that a *little more* studying would have put you in the first class; but for want of that *little*, you'll be nowhere.' And so it turned out.

Amongst the ignoble sciences patronised by Stuart, and in which he much desired to have initiated Frank Raby, was the very ignoble one of dog-fighting. Ignoble as it is, however, our hero wished to witness it, and was conducted to the pit by Stuart, the owner of one of the dogs, who had been the victor in several battles, and had only been beaten once. His competitor was also a formidable one, weighing thirty-six pounds, which was two pounds less than Stuart's, and, as such, inferior to him in one respect. His game, however, was notorious, and it was only shillings for choice—in other words, guineas to pounds—between the two.

I shall not disgust my readers with a description of the contest between two noble animals, whose services were intended for far better purposes. Let it suffice to say that, as it was the first, so it was the last exhibition of this sort that Frank Raby witnessed, and still he did not regret having witnessed it. Exclusive of the courage displayed by the dogs, during a contest of upwards of half an hour, the means taken by their handlers to increase that courage excited his astonishment, if it did not produce pleasure. There is no necessity for recapitulating them; but it appeared that one index to the probable result of the fight was the position of the animal's tail. If erect, he was still undaunted; if inclined to droop, his pluck was doubted, and the betting immediately turned against him. The position of the tail, however, is the general barometer of the dog's mettle. Witness Shakespeare at a bear-fight:—

'Oft have I seen a hot, o'erweening cur,
Run back and bite, because he was withheld;
Who, having suffered with the bear's fell paw,
Hath clapt his tail between his legs, and cried.'

There was another species of sporting, and one very much in fashion in those days, in which Frank Raby was initiated by Will Stuart — the aristocratic one of cock-fighting; and aristocratic it may certainly be called, confirming the truth of the assertion that, although the vulgar borrow vices from the great, the great occasionally condescend to borrow them, in their turn, from the vulgar. It must, however, be admitted that, in point of *respectability*—if such a term can be allowed in this case—there is scarcely a comparison between the operations of the cock- and the dog-pit, the former having been long the resort of many of our accomplished noblemen and country gentlemen, still standing its ground to a certain extent, whilst the latter is nearly abandoned. Whether it may last another century is a matter of some speculation, from the alternations which occur in the taste for all national sport; but that it has stood the test of ages is a fact too well established to admit of a doubt, as well as that a moral has been drawn from it. Themistocles' famous address to the Athenian soldiers affords one, and a signal one, too. On their march to battle he halted them, and directed their attention to two cocks that were fighting, descanting on their determination to conquer or die; and ordered cock-fighting to be afterwards annually exhibited in the camp. The Romans likewise admired the martial spirit of the gamecock; and it is even asserted that Cæsar's troops introduced cock-fighting in England, during their temporary invasion of the country, and that they even made quails to fight. Still, Columella calls it a *Grecian* diversion, and speaks of it in terms of ignominy, as an expensive amusement (which it is), unbecoming the frugal housekeeper, and often attended with the ruin of the parties who follow it. The most offensive part of this practice, however, is now fortunately done away with—I mean the 'Welsh main,' as it is called, which consisted in causing thirty-one of thirty-two cocks to be slaughtered, before the surviving *one* was to be proclaimed the victor!

Although Frank Raby had seen some few exhibitions of fighting-cocks in his father's neighbourhood, and at Eton, he had never seen what is called 'a main' fought: but having a wish to see one, he accompanied his friend Hargrave to the Oxford cockpit, and was introduced by him to the celebrated Bob Dolly, who was at that time the proprietor of it. The particulars of this main need not be given; but, at the expiration of it, the following conversation took place between the two young sportsmen:—

'Well, Frank,' said Hargrave (for Frank was he always called by his intimates), 'what do you think of cock-fighting, now that you have seen it nearly in its best form?'

'Why,' replied Frank, 'I have scarcely made up my mind sufficiently on the subject, to give you a decided answer. I am, however, prepared to say that, although I cannot go the length that you do, when you say, you look upon two cocks, in the arena of a pit, in the light of two champions of olden times, who rush to the charge for glory only, and imagine that, in the shrill and animating note of their crowing, you hear the herald's clarion, still, I consider the first "setting-to," as it is called, of two highly-bred gamecocks, one of the most interesting sights that animated nature can exhibit. Their determined courage throughout the battle, and their invincible spirit, *to conquer or to die*, are something more than natural, and seem to justify the absurd notions entertained by the ancients of these birds, not only in calling them sacred to the sun, but making them to participate of a certain solar divinity, and to be thus feared—at all events, reverenced—even by the lion. But look at the cock in his natural state—a state of freedom. What a beautiful animal he is! What a pattern of a warrior, a husband, and a fine gentleman! See him clap his wings and crow; how proud of his courage does he appear; how gallant he is to his females; how jealous of a rival; and how he is formed for contending with him, for he is all muscle and bone! Then observe what language he has at his command! If he finds food, he calls a favourite female to partake of it; if a danger appears, he bids his family beware; and he has his amorous phrases as well as his terms of defiance and of battle. But his crowing—why, he may be said to invoke the sun; indeed, Shakespeare calls him "the trumpet to the morn"; and many other poets have borrowed their images from him—

> "The crested cock whose clarion sounds the silent hours";

amongst the most beautiful of them, as "the 'larum of the country labourer."'

'Well said, Frank Raby,' exclaimed Hargrave; 'upon my soul you would make a good Methodist preacher, but I much doubt your ever becoming a cocker.'

'I don't know what to say on that point yet,' replied Frank. 'There is much to admire in a battle, and still more in the system throughout; but I feel that there is something both disgusting and cruel in a long-protracted battle, however indicative it may be of the invincible courage of the animal, and however productive of a moral, as Mr. Wyndham and others have considered it to be. But as you are such an advocate for cock-fighting, let me hear what you have to say in defence of it.'

'Why, to tell you the truth,' returned Hargrave, 'I think that, next to finding a fox, the excitement produced at the onset of a battle between cocks exceeds any that I have hitherto experienced. I, therefore, must say I am very partial to cock-fighting as a sport or pastime. But I cannot help looking at it in another light. It appears to me that, from the very extraordinary circumstances and facts developed in pursuance of the whole system—from the breeding the birds, to bringing them to the pit to fight, as well as their conduct in the fight—it must have been intended to excite the curiosity, and promote the researches, of man in the wonderful operations of nature; if not, in this individual instance, to serve as an example to be imitated in certain situations in life. For instance, consider the form of what we so properly call the gamecock: he is not only, as you have described him, composed of little else but muscle and bone; but, looking at his ruddy complexion, his full breast, his lofty neck, the strength of the beam of his leg, and length of his thigh, his large quick eye, and strong beak—crooked and big at its setting on—and his murderous spurs, it is evident that he was intended to fight. But why so?—why should he be armed with such murderous weapons, and endowed with such formidable strength and courage, merely to protect himself, or his own race, from others of his own race? There can be no reason at all for this in an animal which it is evident was designed to be domesticated. The fact is, *he is born a fighter*, and absolutely begins to spur at an adversary soon after he leaves the egg; at all events, before his spurs are grown. Putting him to fight, then, is not having recourse to a force against nature, but an evident indulgence of his natural propensity, for there can be no offence given to him by the bird pitted against him, which he has never seen till taken out of his bag. This is also proved by the well-known facts, that cocks at their walks, and at full liberty, will seek each other for battle as far as they can hear each other's crowing. In fact, there appears to be in them an insatiable thirst *to destroy each other*, which does not appear in other parts of the creation. We hear of carnivorous animals depopulating the places they frequent of every inhabitant, but there is no instance, except in the cock, of a desire to exterminate their own species.'

'Then you really believe it was intended that the courage of these birds should be displayed to man as an example?'

'I do.'

'And in the method pursued in Bob Dolly's cockpit?'

'Ah, there you press me too hard now. I can only say that, if they do fight at all, the arming them with artificial weapons is the very reverse of cruelty, for the contest is sooner ended, and their sufferings trifling in comparison to what they would have been, had they fought with their own natural weapons, by lacerating and bruising each other in every tender part. And hence may be formed a comparison between the duellist and the pugilist. The duellist meets his adversary like the gamecock, voluntarily, and with artificial weapons also; whereas the pugilist is urged to fight merely by a prospect of gain, and to fight with natural weapons, receiving blows and bruises, frequently to the very point of death, to amuse a crowd of spectators. I am inclined, then, to think that, after all, cockfighting is one of the least cruel of all our sports in which the lives of animals are put to the risk. But it is not so much the mere act of fighting, and the display of courage in the gamecock, that excite my admiration: it is, as I said before, the entire system throughout, and the wonderful phenomena that occur in breeding and training these birds. We will commence with the breeding, and the importance of similarity of feather. Where is the philosopher who can discover this necessity?—but so it is. Several attempts were made some years back to cross the Cheshire piles with piles from other countries, and those of great note; but, from a trifling dissimilarity of feather, the breed was very inferior to the original one. But even in the Cheshire piles, the necessity arises of not mixing the dark and light-coloured ones together. Then again, the fidelity with which uniformity of colour is preserved is no less astounding. A celebrated breeder of cocks thus writes on this subject:—"Fifteen years or more I had enjoyed an invariable production of the most complete black-reds bred by an amateur, without a single instance of deviation during that period; but, on the sixteenth year, I had several light piles in one hatch. No change of eggs could possibly have taken place, nor was there a shadow of doubt of interference with any other cock. A well-regulated account of my cocks, however, enabled me to ascertain that there had been a pile in the cross five years previous to my having them from Shropshire; *so that they held highly regular for twenty-one years*, not only in plumage, but in every desired requisite."

'It appears,' continued Hargrave, 'that, had this breeder gone on in a deviation from the original colour, he would have had spangles, as party-coloured fowls are called; but, by persevering afterwards in selecting the darkest-coloured fowls, those in fact most resembling his original attachment, or sort, he preserved not only their feather, but their *constitution*, which is a great consideration with cockers. Now here we have an analogy between the florist and the cocker. A run flower is one which has the inherent vice of changing colour, with little chance of regaining its primitive and valuable brilliancy; consequently it is discarded by the florist, as spangled pullets would be by the cocker.

'There are, also, independent of feather, some strange circumstances arising from the selection of the parentage of game fowls, and these of the very same breed, one, in fact, which has been proved to be good in blood, feather, and heel. For example: cocks bred from a father and daughter have run away, whereas those from a mother and son have stood to be killed by inches.

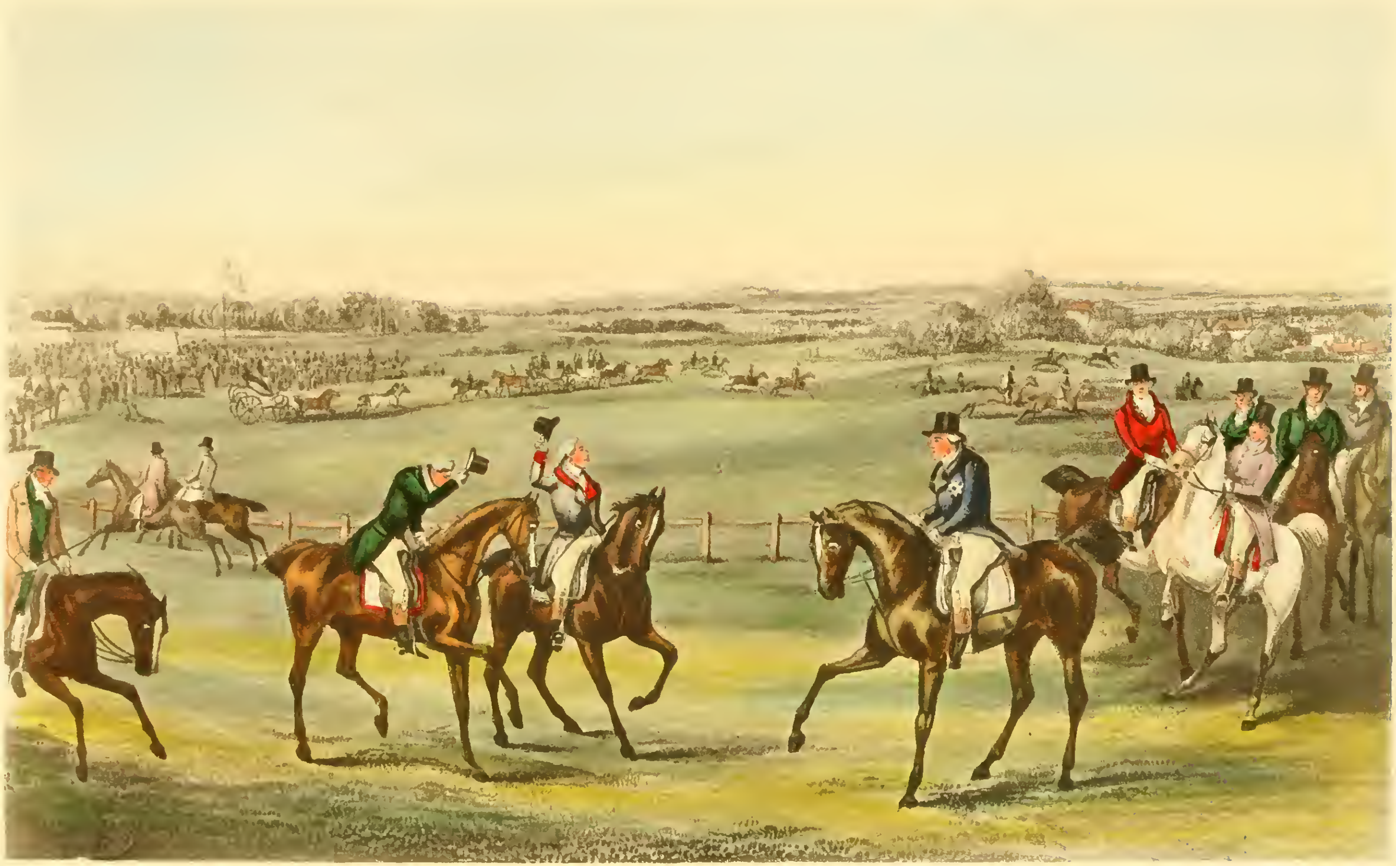
‘Perhaps the best proof of the difficulties of training cocks to fight is to be found in the very few persons who have excelled in this branch of their art. Who would believe it possible that, although a feeder should be able to get a pen of cocks fit to fight for two successive days, he should not be able to have them fit to fight on the third, and yet his competitor on the sod shall be able to do so? This, however, is a very common case. In fact, the whole system of feeding cocks to fight, reducing or increasing their vigour, is one of *consummate* art, and one with which that of training the race-horse can bear no comparison as to the difficulty of it. Then, again, what a true picture of life is a cockpit! Depend upon it, Frank Raby, you will never have seen human nature fully and faithfully displayed in the rough, until you shall have seen it in a cockpit, at such places as Chester, Manchester—in short, anywhere bordering on the north. Amongst noblemen and gentlemen of the highest character and respectability, and who have made cocking their pursuit through life, you will see men of the coarsest exterior, and the meanest garb, outwitting them by odds in their judgment in selecting the winners before the battles commence, and exhibiting indescribable acuteness in discovering injuries afterwards, which, of course, they turn to account before many of their superiors are aware of them. This extreme quickness of sight, by which what is called a “cut throat” is discovered *previously to its effects becoming visible*, is scarcely to be expected from a heavy and dull-looking mechanic—perhaps a blacksmith, or a collier, who may have walked fifty miles to the pit—but such is often the case, and, of course, he reaps his reward by *immediately* backing the other cock.’

‘What do you mean by a “cut throat”? I never saw a cock’s throat cut in fighting.’

‘Nor I neither. It is a body blow, but, having wounded a vital part, is so called from the fact of the blood soon finding its way into the throat, and thence ejected by the mouth, consequently impeding respiration. Cocks *in very high condition* will occasionally “throw it off,” as the term is, and go on; but it generally betokens a speedy termination of the battle. The setting or handling of the cocks is also a very difficult art; in fact, I have no hesitation in saying, that not only does a cockpit include more natural talent, in the rough, than any other place in which men of all descriptions are given to congregate but that, unless a man be a man of talent, he has no business to enter one.'

Frank listened attentively to this somewhat philosophical description of cocking and the cockpit, and whether or not he became a cocker will hereafter be shown. He, however, reminded Hargrave that the late Mr. Wyndham—then in the zenith of his reputation, as one of our distinguished senators, and *distinguished also for his humanity*—had given it as his opinion that the conflict between inferior animals incited the courage of a nation; and, in support of his hypothesis, availed himself of the character of the English people, who, he said, have ever been as remarkable for courage, or what is vulgarly called 'pluck,' as for their predilection for such conflicts, cockfighting especially.

The first public exhibition of our hero, during his residence at Christchurch, was on Burford race-course, in Oxfordshire, on which was held what was called the Bibury meeting, continued (though in very diminished form) to the present time. But these were Bibury's very best days. In addition to the encouragement given to it by the patronage and presence of George IV., then Prince of Wales, who was received by the Earl of Sherborne, for the week, at his seat in the neighbourhood, and who every day made his appearance on the course as a private gentleman, on his favourite cropped roan hack, of which he was as fond as the impetuous Hotspur of his 'crop-ear roan,' which, in an equestrian transport, he called his 'throne,' with merely a groom in attendance, and in familiar conversation with all who had the privilege of addressing him, there was a galaxy of gentlemen jockeys, who alone rode at this meeting, which has never since been equalled. Amongst them were the present Duke of Dorset, who always rode for the Prince; His Grace's brother, the late Hon. George Germain; the late Mr. Delmé Radcliffe—who had the management of His Royal Highness's racing stud, until his decease as George IV.;—the late Lords Charles Somerset and Milsington, and Lord Delamere, then Mr. Cholmondeley; Sir Tatton Sykes, then Mr. Sykes; Messrs. Hawkes, Bullock, Worral, George Pigot Lindow, Lowth, Musters, Probyn, etc., all first-raters,



Bibury meeting in its palmy days.

and some of them in as constant practice as any of the regular jockeys. And a curious fact may here be mentioned, and of which Frank Raby was a witness. The Prince of Wales had a horse called Ploughater, by Trumpeter, out of an Evergreen mare, and bred by Lord Clermont, which was extremely difficult to ride, from his hard pulling, and awkward position of his head in his gallop. The Duke of Dorset, however, rode him in several successful races, but at length broke a blood-vessel by the exertion. Having lost a great quantity of blood, His Grace did not appear on the course the next day, but on the following one, to the surprise of all persons who saw him, he not only appeared, but insisted upon mounting Ploughater again, who had to walk over the course for a Stakes.

There was something especially jockey-like in the appearance of the Duke of Dorset, his brother Germain, and Delmé Radcliffe, not only when mounted on race-horses, but when seen riding on the course, on their hacks, often with their saddles buckled to their sides, after the manner of the professional men. Indeed, it is much to be doubted whether there was so much as two pounds in weight difference between the performance of that trio, as well as of Mr. Hawkes, and the best of the jockeys in those days. Hawkes's forte was as much making play in running, as in what is called a waiting race, by his excellent judgment of pace. In fact, he was a perfect horseman, either over a course or a country. George Pigot was likewise very good in his saddle, but had not the head of Hawkes in a near race. Sir Tatton Sykes was a second Hawkes, cool, and with a beautiful hand. Of his coolness, perhaps, nothing can beat what I am now about to relate. When riding a match, at York, his horse bolted, and, falling over some rails, he, of course, fell to the ground. His antagonist, having observed the accident, was cantering gently along towards the winning-post, supposing the race to be his own: when, within a few yards of home, he was passed by a horseman, in a coat and hat, who wished him a pleasant ride. This was Sir Tatton, who had borrowed the coat and hat from a bystander, when he fell, and thus deceived his competitor, who mistook him for one of the crowd. So fond was Sir Tatton of riding races, that he has been known to ride a hundred miles for that sole purpose, and return to Yorkshire on his hack immediately on the event being decided. Of Mr. Bullock

—commonly called Nando Bullock, his name having been Orlando—some amusing anecdotes are recorded, in reference to his passion for race-riding. The following is a description of a race he once rode and won:—

'I turned the last post,' said he, '*snug as murder*; now, said I to myself, the pantomime is going to begin, and I think I shall beat Mr. Merryman.' (There was a horse called Merryman in the race, and heavily backed to win.) Again, when he broke his leg and thigh in a race, by his horse running against a post, he absolutely spurred the persons who were carrying him upstairs to bed, with his other leg, so little daunted was he by the mishap. He met his death by an accident, at last, and was much regretted by his friends, for his great good humour.

Lords Charles Somerset, Milsington, and Delamere, rode much at Bibury, and well—Lord Charles Somerset especially—although they were all above the jockey height, as also was Mr. Musters; but Mr. Worral, one of the best of them, was cast in the jockey mould.

But to return to our young sportsman at Oxford. Having engaged a tandem for the purpose, with four of the best gig-horses that the Oxford stables could produce, Frank Raby and his friend Hargrave thus arranged their plans for the approaching Bibury Meeting. They sent two of the horses to Witney, and by thus relieving those that brought them from Oxford, they were enabled to go to, and return from, the course, and be in their college at night—driving alternate stages, for the furtherance of their mutual improvement in this hazardous occupation, as well as for their mutual pleasure; and all went well for the first three days. Having a capital leader over the last ground, who wanted nothing but holding, and keeping his head straight, these aspiring youths dashed through the crowd, threading the carriages and horses on the road, with such skill and dexterity as to attract much notice—and, at length, that of the Prince, who had been watching their manœuvres on the race-course.

'Who are they?' inquired His Royal Highness of Mr. Lake.

'I do not know their names, sir,' replied Mr. Lake, 'but I understand they are Christchurch men.'

'Ask their names,' resumed the Prince: 'they will do, in time, that is to say—*if they don't break their necks.*'

I well remember the scenes at Burford, and all the neighbouring towns, after the races of the day were over. That at Burford beggars description, for, independently of the bustle occasioned by the accommodations necessary for the Club who were domiciled in the town, the concourse of persons, of all sorts and degrees, and all in want of something, was immense. Our young Oxonians, however, had taken care to provide for themselves in this respect; and with a few more collegians, and kindred spirits too, had formed a select party of themselves, and, by paying the piper well, had no reason to complain. But now for the finale to this '*lark*,' I might say, but that word was not used in those days, in this sense, at least. On the last day of the meeting, all having hitherto gone smoothly, an awkward mishap occurred, but which will, in a great measure, be accounted for by the scene that took place when the tandem came to the door with Frank Raby on the *bench*.

'Come along, Hargrave,' said Frank, 'I am sure you have had wine enough; and, as for myself, I can scarcely tell the leader from the wheeler. Besides, you know this mare won't stand much longer ere she begins kicking, and we have only an hour and forty minutes to do the twenty-one miles in.'

'Kick away,' said Hargrave, as he came staggering towards the tandem; 'you know I had rather be upset than not; who cares for a kicker, with a kicking strap over her back, and a good coachman behind her?'

'Many a true word is spoken in jest,' says the proverb; the mare did not kick; but in descending one of those sharp 'pitches,' as they are called by coachmen, between Burford and Witney—which, in those days, were often covered with half-broken stone—and at by far too quick a rate, she stepped on one of them, and fell, and was dragged some distance by the leader. But now for the fate of her driver: he escaped with only some slight bruises, by falling on the mare whilst she was being dragged, and rolling thence to the ground; but Hargrave was not so fortunate. A dislocation of his left shoulder was the result, which, he being a very muscular young man, it required the united strength of four men to reduce—putting him to extreme torture for the time; neither did he speedily recover its effects.

But there is another proverb which applies well here. 'Good comes out of evil'; as it did in this case. Both these young gentlemen made a solemn vow, on the morrow, that they would never again mount either a tandem or a coach box, at least, not with reins in their hands, when they had drunk too much wine; and, though they became very celebrated as coachmen, and were occasionally put to rather a severe test, they most religiously adhered to their vow.

It was reserved to Hogarth to write a scene of furniture. The rake's levee-room: the nobleman's dining-room: the apartments of the husband and wife, in Marriage *A la mode*; the alderman's parlour; the poet's bed-chamber: and many others, are a history of the manners of the age. Nevertheless, as the furniture and other accompaniments of apartments do, in a great measure, describe the characters of the persons who inhabit them, I will attempt a brief sketch of the rooms occupied by the two Rabys, at Christchurch, as also those of Hargrave.

The apartments of Andrew require only a short notice. A bust of Shakespeare was on one table, and one of Sir Isaac Newton on another; prints of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, and also of Adam Smith, author of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, adorned the walls: and a handsome pair of globes were on a side-table, together with a large portfolio of maps and drawings of flowers from nature. On his book-shelves were the best editions of the classics — both in English and in the dead languages—as well as the chief historical works of sundry nations and times. Neither were the rooms in which Frank Raby was domiciled by any means wanting in books, which his uncle had taken care to provide for him, nor were they altogether uselessly bestowed upon him. In fact, he read hard by starts, but wanted the steady application of his brother, which was essential to cutting a figure in the schools, even in those days when examinations were not over-strict. But the ornaments of these rooms were of a very different character to those of his brother: and as the taste and inclinations of men are displayed by such trifles, it will not be amiss to make mention of them.

On his mantel-shelf was a beautiful figure of a race-horse, cast in alabaster, and over it hung the good old-fashioned print of Partner, the race-horse, taking a sweat at Newmarket. That of Hambletonian and Diamond had just then been published, and, of course, was to be found here, as well as in many other rooms in this aristocratic College. The celebrated carriage match of Lord March (afterwards Duke of Queensbury), over Newmarket Heath, hung *vis à vis* to the match between Meynell's Richmond and Smith Barry's Bluecap, two celebrated foxhounds, over the Beacon course of the same place. The famous prints, 'in caricature,' of Dick Knight and the Pytchley Hunt, were also to be seen, as well as an excellent print of Robert Forfeit, so many years huntsman to the great John Warde. Tom Oldacre, on Brush, just then published, was likewise in the collection: as was Sir Thomas Mostyn's favourite foxhound bitch, Lady, with her whelps, a print that is to this day to be seen in half the public-houses in Oxfordshire. There were likewise paintings of Bonnybell and Tyrant, two favourite harriers in his father's pack: but the deficiency of globes and maps was made up by a plentiful assortment of four-horse and hunting whips, boxing gloves and fishing rods, and sundry other paraphernalia of the sportsman.

Hargrave's rooms were very similarly adorned. Arthur Wentworth, the earth-stopper, was suspended over his fireplace. A Cheshire pile gamecock was above that; and in other parts of his sitting-room were the following well-known prints: —A bitch fox and her cubs, by Sartorius; Humphreys and Mendoza in attitude; the Phenomena trotting mare; a portrait of Eclipse, with John Oakley (the only man who could ride him) on his back; the great Malay cock match; the York 'Highflyer' coach, immortalised by Hogarth; the London and Shrewsbury Mail; Jem Howell, the celebrated coachman of Costar's 'Oxford and Brummagem Day,' as it was then called; portraits of Bill Stuart, and Bob Dolly, with his famous dog Nelson, 'the cock of the Oxford walk'; likewise an excellent picture of Squires Draper and Newby, two celebrated Yorkshire sportsmen, representing them in the grey of the morning, opening the door of the kennel. Among the books were some odd numbers of the 'Racing Calendar'; the first volume of the 'Stud Book,' the only one then published; 'Isaak Walton, on Angling'; 'Peacham's Complete Gentleman'; and some numbers of the 'Sporting Magazine,' a periodical not of much note in those days.

In his bedroom was a good show of whips, both for hunting and for the road, all made by Mr. Crowther of Swallow-street, the crack man of that day, and who sold them for a crack price.

'But *were there not always crack men?*' was the answer

Hargrave made to some one who asked him why he gave a guinea for his four-horse whips, when good ones were to be had for half the sum? 'You may get them cheaper, doubtless, but where will you get them so good? Are there more than two men in England, who can make a really good hunting saddle?' And what else was to be seen in this bachelor's bedroom? why, not much beyond what was commonly found in a gentleman commoner's bed-chamber at this time, whose only object was to find repose from the fatigues of the day, or to shake off the fumes of bad wine. There was, however, a print of a sleeping Venus, suspended against the wall, with some lines of his own written under it, merely expressive of his high admiration of the human form; and, pinned to the curtain of his bed, so as to be visible by him when awake, the words *diluculo exsurgam* legibly written on a slip of white paper. But there was something more than met the eye of a common observer in these words. It was not the mere act of *early rising*, which these words imply, that stood so high in Mr. Hargrave's estimation; the fact was, he found, by experience, that by being what is called 'a good man at morning chapel,' he obtained the credit of being a regular man in his college, whereas, in truth, he was anything but that. Although perfectly free from all vicious propensities, and one of the most popular men at Oxford, at the time, he was what would now be termed 'an out-and-out larker,' and as often broke through the rules and trammels of the University as any other young gentleman of his day on its books.

Carthage is said only to have produced one Hannibal; and great men, in their way, are scarce in all modern communities. At the time I am alluding to, very good horsemen over a country were much more rare than they now are; and there were not more than a dozen in the University of Oxford who were entitled to be called such. The very best among them, however, was Hargrave, who united all the good properties essential to riding well after hounds. He possessed great strength, unaccompanied by great weight, not exceeding twelve stone (fourteen pounds to the stone), with his saddle, which is considered the best of all weights for crossing a strong country, and for this reason: the twelve-stone man, independently of his power to assist his horse, to pull open gates, and knock about obstacles of any sort, is almost sure to be mounted on a horse worthy to be called a hunter, that is, a horse of power; whereas, your nine or ten-stone sportsman is too often mounted on what is called 'a nice little horse,' to carry his weight; in other words, a cat-legged weed, not worthy the name of hunter, and which gets knocked backwards, or turned heels upward, by a strong grower in a hedge, which the horse of a twelve-stone man would drive before him, or break. Then, to use a vulgar expression, Hargrave had the nerves of a bull-dog, in the field, and would turn from no fence that he considered there was a chance to get over when in chase; but was free from the folly of taking unnecessary leaps, merely to display his horsemanship. And, perhaps, one proof of his good horsemanship may be gathered from this fact,—his horses had both been purchased, at his request, when young and *raw,* as the term is, that he might have the task of making them hunters by his own hand; and capital hunters did he make them, although differing much from each other. *Rupert,* a large-bodied, sleepy-looking bay gelding, about fifteen hands two inches high, with long shoulders and quarters, and short back, standing over a great deal of ground, upon short and large legs; wanting nothing in his mouth except a plain snaffle bit, but requiring spurs in his sides over almost every yard that he went; would leap timber, either flying or standing, according to his rider's pleasure; was one of the best creepers in the world, consequently, seldom got into scrapes; and wanted nothing but a turn more speed to make him one of the best hunters in the world. He was, however, as stout as steel and—no small recommendation to an Oxford man's horse—he could 'come again,' as the grooms say, very quickly, after a hard run, and was good, on the average of sport, for four days in a fortnight; at all events, for three.

Topthorn, his other horse, was an animal of a different description. In the first place, he was better bred; and, in the next, in a form altogether different from *Rupert.* He was what is called an 'up-standing horse,' nearly sixteen hands high: not large-bodied, although an excellent feeder, and with very good legs. As a fencer, he was quite out of the common way, both at height and width, although there was one imperfection in his fencing, from which he derived his name; and here he was the very reverse of Rupert. He was not only not a creeper—much less a standing leaper—but so far from leaping *into* a fence, as every hunter ought occasionally to do, when required, he could scarcely be made to go near enough to his fences before he rose at them, so great was his dislike to feel a thorn or brier about his legs. His pace was also far better than Rupert's—good enough, indeed, for any country and any hounds; he was capital at both timber and water, and, barring the imperfection which gave him his name, one of the most accomplished hunters of his day. This, indeed, may be inferred from the following rather uncommon fact:—A nobleman, residing in Oxfordshire, but then hunting in Leicestershire, offered him 400 guineas for Topthorn. His answer was laconic, but creditable to him, and may be said to have 'given token of a goodly day to-morrow.'

'I shall not take 400 guineas for my horse,' said this promising young sportsman. 'I am not in debt; and I see no reason why I should not ride a good horse with hounds, as well as his lordship.'

As may naturally be supposed, Hargrave was not only looked to as a pilot in the field, by all the novitiates in the 'noble science' at that time in the University; but Frank Raby, who had been well entered to hounds, previously to his matriculation at Christchurch, looked to him for instruction and improvement. And he need not have gone much farther for instruction: his seat was firm, and altogether good, with his body pliably erect; his feet well out in front; the knee nearly straight, and not bent at an angle by short stirrup-leathers, as it was too often seen in those days: on the contrary, he sat well down upon his fork, with his head up, and, as he said of himself, he rode with a light hand and an easy bit. As for the bay horse, that is to say, Rupert, a child might have almost ridden him to hounds; but it required a horseman to handle Topthorn; and it was from seeing Hargrave's performance on him, that Frank Raby acquired lessons which he never forgot, and which afterwards perfected him in the horseman's art.

In proportion to the number of young men of family and fortune rising up in the world, will be the proportion of the various occupations and pursuits which their several inclinations lead them to engage in. That fox-hunting has ever been, and, it is to be hoped, ever will be one, it is scarcely necessary to add; although, at the time I am alluding to, there were fewer followers of the chase in the Universities than are to be found in them at the present day. In fact, I have already said there were only about a dozen really good workmen, at this period, at Oxford, who kept hunters during term, and who may be said to have done the thing in a truly workmanlike style throughout. Amongst them was a commoner of Oriel, who accompanied Hargrave and Frank Raby, on a fine morning in the first week in December, to Oddington Ashes, a favourite cover in the Beaufort Hunt; their horses having been sent to Chipping Norton on the preceding evening, the distance from Oxford being upwards of twenty miles.

In those days there were not the crowds of horsemen with hounds, composing what is termed 'the field,' that are now to be seen; but, on the day of which I am speaking, about fifty well-mounted gentlemen and half a dozen farmers were assembled—all having some pretensions to be called sportsmen; in other words, they were met together for very different purposes than riding at, or over, each other, after the manner of our steeple-chase jockeys of these times; and driving hounds over the scent, as if that instinctive agent, called *nose*, was by no means necessary to their pursuing it, to the final accomplishment of their object—the death of a stout fox.

It is unnecessary to relate all the particulars of this day's hunting: suffice it to say, that a fox was soon found, and, after having taken two deep rings in this justly celebrated cover, broke under the most favourable circumstances; namely, with the body of the hounds on the scent, and the horsemen where they should be; not too near, to drive them over the scent, or so far distant from them as to be unable to enjoy them in their work. Still there was one thing unusual in the break. The general run of foxes from Oddington Ashes is, what is called in that country, 'up hill'; that is to say, not down the vale, but either for the woods of Heythrop, or Ditchley, or, as oftentimes, for the forest of Witchwood. Upon this day, however, the fox took a very different course, going straight down the vale for Pain's Furze, near to the town of Moreton-in-Marsh, and thence to Bourton Wood—beyond Bourton-on-the-Hill—now hunted by Lord Segrave. Nor was this regretted by the young Oxonians, although it took them in a contrary direction to their homes. It gave to Frank Raby, and to the commoner of Oriel —whose name, by the bye, was Goodall—an opportunity of witnessing the fine horsemanship and good judgment of Hargrave, whom they selected as their pilot in as severe a country as hounds often run over. In the first place, they had the Kingham brook to leap, and the Kingham field to cross, which none but good horses can do, and live with hounds when they are going their best pace, as they did in the run I am alluding to. And it told on the horses that crossed it on this day. It reduced the number that started with the hounds to, at most, one third; and the field soon became, what in these days is termed, 'most desirably select.' But the trial of trials was yet to come. There runs through this rich vale a brook called the Evenload—commonly called the Emload—which not more than one man in twenty would ride at, in those days, nor will more than one man in ten get well over it in these. In fact, it is, in many places, all but a *stopper*; in all, a very serious affair for horses a little pumped out by the pace, the banks being far from good, and the water both wide and deep. Now it so happened that, by a lucky turn, Goodall, and a hard-riding parson of that time, arrived first at the brook, and the parson took it in his stroke. Neither did Goodall intend doing otherwise. Taking a good pull at Pineapple (for such was his horse called, in consequence of the deep scoring of his legs, by some merciless operator, with the firing-irons) at about a hundred yards from its banks, he sent him manfully at it, but by not extending himself far enough, he dropped short, and fell backwards, with his rider under him, into the stream!

'He is *in*, by heavens,' exclaimed Hargrave, who saw the mishap, 'and the parson has it all to himself.'

'He'll be smothered,' said Frank Raby; 'what's to be done?'

'Not he,' resumed Hargrave, '*he's clear of his horse*; do you go *quick* at the brook to the right, and I'll go to the left.'

No sooner said than done: both charged it and got over, and six more of the field did the same thing; but it was a trial of nerve to a young one to ride at a place of this description, in which his friend and his horse were floundering, and within twenty yards of him at the time.

No one headed the parson, who kept the lead to the end, the fox having sunk before the pack within a field of Bourton Wood, the earths of which, being open, might perchance have saved his life.

'Well done, *my old college*,' exclaimed the parson, as he saw the two Christchurch men amongst the eleven that were in at the death, and no more appeared until the fox was broken up by the pack, and then only the few who had passed the brook by a bridge.

'But what is become of Mr. Goodall?' was the anxious inquiry of many.

'I saw him safe on the bank,' replied a whipper-in: 'and I told a farmer to send some men to assist his horse, which he promised he would immediately do.' And he was as good as his word. Pineapple was pulled out by a team of horses, not much the worse for his disaster; and when his brother collegians returned to Chipping Norton, where their hacks awaited their arrival, they found the one comfortably dressed in his stall, and the other in the act of finishing a good-sized bowl of *bishop*, which he had swallowed after his luncheon, by way of keeping out the cold, as has ever been the good practice, as well of ancient as of modern times.

CHAPTER VII

A trip to Ascot Races, succeeded by an inquiry into the systems and methods of travelling, from the earliest ages to the golden age of the road in England.

On the morning following his arrival in town, Frank Raby received the following letter from his friend, Sir John Inkleton :—

'Stevens's Hotel, Bond Street, June.

'Dear Frank,—

'I arrived in town last night, and hope to see you here to dinner to-morrow at six o'clock. It is of no use asking the old one; he is no company for you and me, for he once told me he could not live with men "whose talk was of bullocks." I twigged what he meant. However, he is not a bad sort of fellow at bottom; and all the harm I wish him is, that he were safely landed in heaven, and you had his money. I think you would make a better use of it than he does, with his *antics*, as old Dick says. I shall ask Jack Webber to meet you, and we will have some coaching talk. The nags are all in town—two rare teams, and two rest horses—ten in all; they will be quite ready for Ascot on Tuesday, when you shall have a seat on the box.

'Believe me, yours ever,
'John Inkleton.

'*P.S.*—I saw Jack Bailey to-day, who spoke of you. By the bye, they were all well at the Abbey when I left home, Andrew making the agreeable to old and young, especially to the Chapmans, but I think Egerton has nailed the youngest, and the eldest won't do at any price. Andrew is an out-and-out slow one, except at Latin, Greek, and the Fathers; and there, Egerton says, he is not easy to beat.'

The hour of six being arrived—there were no eight or nine o'clock dinners in those days — Sir John, his friend Jack Webber, a great amateur coachman, Frank Raby, and Hargrave, met at Stevens's Hotel, as appointed, and sat down to a dinner of the best of everything, in one of the private rooms. The following was a part of their talk:—

Sir John.—'Well, Jack, glad to meet you once more; what news in town?'

Webber.—'Why, the devil to pay at the "Bull and Mouth." They have got the distemper in the yard, and they have taken Will Brydges off the Shrewsbury "Union," the best coach out of London for a coachman, and put him on the Bristol "Blue." Besides, they talk of docking them all of the short shillings the first stage, in and out, which is not fair, because we all know that London coachmen are at heavier expenses for lodging and food than those who work down in the country.'

Sir John.—'And the "Swan with Two Necks," how go they on there?'

Webber.—'Oh, all right, as regards the nags—never better: but the devil's own work between the "Telegraph" and the "Defiance," on the Manchester road. I saw Bob[1] go out with his coach to-day, and Jack[1] yesterday, both very flash indeed; in short, dressed more like gentlemen than coachmen.'

Sir John.—'And Jack Hale, how is he?'

Webber.—'Never better; and his stock looks as well as he does. He has just accepted the office of secretary to the Benevolent Whip Club, to which several of our friends have subscribed handsomely.'

Sir John.—'An excellent institution that. No class of persons stand more in need of something of the sort, to enable them to fall back upon, in case of illness or accident, to which they are so much exposed, as coachmen and guards do. I shall see Jack when he comes in, to-morrow, and tell him to put down my name for ten guineas a year. I have had no less than three coachmen and two guards invalided at my house in the country, during the last two years, who might not have required my assistance had they been members of the "Benevolent Club."'

Webber.—'I suppose you have seen Jack Bailey, as his coach came in about two hours ago?'

Sir John.—'Of course I did, and showed him, *by his own watch*—at least, by the one which once was his—how, to a minute, he had kept his time. "It's a wonder I did, Sir John," said Jack, "for the roads be in a queerish state, after that 'ere thunder-storm yesterday; and there is at least half a ton of Birmingham shillings in the front boot." All the better for the way-bill, said I; and as for the bad shillings, as Jack observed, that's nothing to nobody: all trades must live, and we are all honest men till we are found out.'

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[1] Bob Snow, formerly on the Brighton road, and Jack Marchant, who died landlord of the 'Greyhound Inn,' at Newmarket.

At this moment the door opened, and in walked Frank Raby.

Sir John.—'Frank! my boy, how are you?—glad to see you once more; let me introduce you to Mr. Webber, an old Etonian and Christchurch man; like ourselves, devilish fond of the road, a right good coachman, but not much of a fox-hunter.'

Webber.—'Happy to make your acquaintance, Mr. Raby. Inkleton tells me you are *one of us*; fond of the ribbons, eh? Bailey says you were one of his best pupils when at Eton, and Jack Hale says there are few better out of Oxford—gownsmen, of course.'

Frank.—'I am very fond of driving four horses, but do not pretend to call myself a coachman. If I make one in *five* years from this time, I shall think myself very fortunate.'

Webber.—'It cost me ten, and as many hundreds of pounds as well. My bill, with old Mother Jones, at Oxford, for box-coats for guards and coachmen, was never under a hundred per annum, for many years; and I am afraid to say what it has cost me in four-horse whips, also given away. Then my score at public-houses, on different roads, was something approaching fifty pounds a year for what coachmen and guards call their "allowance." For example, that at the "Magpies," on Hounslow Heath, for rum-and-milk to the mail coaches, up and down, was no joke—generally exceeding twenty pounds. No house on the road makes such capital rum-and-milk as the "Magpies" does; the coachmen call it "milking the bull." But I don't regret the money I spent in this way, for many reasons. It gave me an insight into all sorts of life; it made me a coachman, which nothing but road-work will do; it gave me an opportunity of doing many a kind act towards persons who were not so fortunately cast in life as myself; and last, though not least—for I never encouraged what I considered a worthless fellow, or a blackguard—I have reason to believe I have contributed, with others, equally fond of the ribbons as myself, towards the commencement of a new era amongst coachmen and guards. From the notice taken of them by gentlemen, they appear to be endeavouring to make themselves worthy of their regard and protection; and if such should prove the case, I shall never regret the many hundred guineas they have received from me. Neither is the obligation all on one side. I have been indebted to them for much amusement, which I could not have enjoyed but with their permission; and it must be remembered that they gave me that permission at the risk of losing their places. But you are very fond of hunting, as well as driving, Mr. Raby. I know all about you from Hargrave, who is the son of a friend of my father's, and a really good fellow too."

Frank.—'I am very fond of both; but am afraid I shall not be able to enjoy them, or even one of them, in perfection.'

Webber.—'And why not?'

Frank.—'I shall not be able to afford the expenses. I fear I shall not be content with the common run of countries, after what I have heard of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire; and, fond as I am of road-work, I should like to have a team of my own.'

Webber.—'Oh! no fear. By what I have heard, from Hargrave and others, you have a rich old uncle, at whose death you will succeed to a very large property, chiefly in money, and that the worthy gentleman is not likely to be long-lived. That being the case, you will not want for money in this town of London, for there are plenty of money-lending rascals who will advance you what sum you may require on your expectations. Besides, no doubt, your father will leave you a good——'

Sir John.—'Hold hard, there, Webber; I don't like the post-obit system at all. Remember what happened to Newland, who was at Oxford with me. Besides, although I think it very probable that Raby's father will leave our young friend the Hopewell estate, which is not entailed, you must be aware that his expectations from his uncle are merely expectations. It is still possible he may marry, and have children, which, of course, *Moses* would take into the calculation; in which case, the raising money by post-obit would be most ruinous.'

Webber.—'What happened to Newland? he was after my time at College, and I never heard anything about him in the money way: but I know he was very fond of racing, and used to say that, from his great talent for calculation, he expected to make a fortune by the turf.'

Sir John.—'He lost £100,000, at least, by talking of post-obiting his aunt. He called out, publicly, in the ring at Newmarket, "*What odds will any one bet me, that I don't win the Derby, in four years after my old aunt dies?*" This was mentioned, in his own neighbourhood, as a mere joke; but on its being conveyed to the ears of the old lady, by the parson of the parish in which she lived, and, of course, commented upon for its enormity, he was left £100 to purchase a mourning suit and a ring. Now, for what I know of Mr. Beaumont Raby, he would be very likely indeed to pursue the same plan by a nephew who might post-obit him.'

Webber.—'And did the parson get the £100,000?'

Sir John.—'No, thank God! it was left chiefly to hospitals and Sunday-schools; but poor Newland has never held up his head in the world since. It is a good lesson to all young gentlemen who attempt to post-obit their relations. If, however, my young friend here wants the means of keeping an extra hunter or two, during his uncle's lifetime—for I am quite sure he will not need assistance afterwards—I will take care he shall be supplied with them, without having recourse to a usurious money-lender. But, Frank, my good fellow, don't get much into debt, if you can help it. Some of my acquaintance have never recovered the effects of debt contracted early.'

Webber.—'True; but I think the fault there often lies with the old ones. Every father ought to ask his son, when he quits the University, what debts he has left unpaid? when, by a *speedy* arrangement of them, future expenses and extortion, and, in no few cases, ruin to the contractor of them, would be avoided. They hang like an *incubus* upon a man, who is not able to discharge them at the time, and often cause him to be reckless in his future proceedings. By the bye, I can tell you a good anecdote on this subject, and it relates to an intimate friend of mine, a fellow commoner, of Trinity College, Cambridge. Two years after he quitted the University, he accompanied his father to one of the Newmarket Meetings—all of which he attended—and was thus addressed by him at its close:—“I have lately seen, in my letter-bag, a considerable number of letters, addressed to you, bearing the *Cambridge* post mark, which leads me to believe you have some scores left unpaid in that town, in spite of the handsome allowance you received from me. However, as you spent your money in good society, and left a fair name behind you in the College, I shall freely forgive you, if my suspicions prove to be just. To-morrow morning, then, we will breakfast at Cambridge, on our return to town; and if, in two hours after our arrival there, you will give me a list of *the entire* of your debts, they shall all be embodied in one cheque, at sight.” My friend was placed in rather a trying position. The *entire* of his debts—and his father laid strong emphasis on the epithet—amounted to above £800, a sum greatly exceeding, as he thought, his liberal father's expectations! Then what was to be done? To have given in a mutilated list would have been deceiving himself, by deceiving his father: so he took courage, and boldly gave in the aggregate amount. His generous parent took his cheque-book from his pocket, and having drawn on his banker for the required amount, never afterwards mentioned the subject in the presence of his son!'

Sir John.—‘And what effect had all this on your friend?'

Webber.—‘The best possible effect; he has been a prudent man ever since. But, speaking of old college friends, let me ask you, Raby, how you like my friend Hargrave.'

Frank.—‘Very much, indeed; he is my most particular ally. He is supposed to be the best horseman and sportsman, combined, in the University; and, in every respect, a good fellow.'

Webber.—‘And don't you like Topthorn and Rupert?'

Frank.—‘The best horses in Oxford.'

Sir John.—‘Barring Achilles and the General, Frank; but I suppose your modesty induces you to place those of your friend first?'

Frank.—‘They are generally first in the field, Sir John.'

Sir John.—‘That may be; Hargrave is an older hand than you are over a country; but, with equal men upon them, I should be inclined to back Achilles against Topthorn in a severe run.'

Frank.—'He has not got the speed of him, Sir John; neither do I think Achilles can cover so large a fence.'

Sir John.—'Well, Frank, I commend your candour—I may say, your sincerity; for, as I purchased the horses for you, you might have compromised truth for politeness' sake. As I detest a boaster, I sincerely commend you for what you have said: and now, if you please, we will sit down to our soup.'

In the course of the evening, the arrangements for attending Ascot Races were thus stated by Sir John:—

'I shall send one team to Staines, where it will remain during the meeting; so that we shall go and return on each day, which will add much to our amusement; and I think our party will be a pleasant one: at all events, I will do my best towards making it such, and have given orders that a good dinner, for eight, shall await us every day, at the "Bush"; so that we shall have the road clear for us on our return to town, and travel in the cool of the evening, when the crowd of cockneys will be dispersed.'

It is not worth while to enter into the detail of an Ascot Meeting, so long passed by as this is; but, as may easily be imagined, the splendour of the scene, unrivalled in the world, made a deep impression upon our hero. Neither was it the scene alone, in which the enthusiastic reception of the Royal Family formed a principal and pleasing feature, that impressed his mind. He saw racing to perfection. He saw the performance of the best horses and the best jockeys of the day; amongst the latter, the famous Samuel Chifney, and John Arnull, both riding for the Prince of Wales; Tom Goodison, and others of equal Newmarket celebrity; as also Billy Pierce, as he was called, the noted Yorkshire jockey, then riding for His Grace of Cleveland, at that time Lord Darlington. But we must not forget Dennis Fitzpatrick, imported from Ireland by Lord Clermont, who was at that period in the height of practice, but whose life was cut short by catching cold in wasting. Frank Raby's admiration of these men, as also of the horses on which they distinguished themselves, the best, perhaps, of their day, at all events very superior to any he had ever seen before, was almost boundless; and he would, now and then, ask himself the question:—'Shall *I* ever make a figure on this course?' The answer to which, he must be aware, depended upon various circumstances, quite beyond his control, although within the range of speculation.

On the first morning of the meeting—a beautiful one in June—and at the hour of ten o'clock, Sir John's team was at the door of Stevens's Hotel, and nothing could be more correct in its appointments. The coach was a bright yellow, neatly picked out with black, and a plain crest on the upper door-pannel. The mountings were, of course, of brass, to suit the furniture of the harness; there were roof-irons to the front roof, which held three persons, and a comfortable dickey behind, to carry the two servants. The box was likewise on the true coaching principle, made to sail forwards towards the wheel-horses, with a good roomy footboard, and well-cushioned seat, allowing plenty of elbow-room for two. The horses were dappled greys, which did credit to all parties; first, to their owner, for the selection of them; next, to the men who had the care of them; for the white hairs on their bodies were as white as the driven snow, and their harness equally well polished. But Sir John's order for *soap* was unlimited, one severe tax on the use of grey coach-horses; and it is said he never grumbled if the year's bill for that purifying article did not exceed £100!

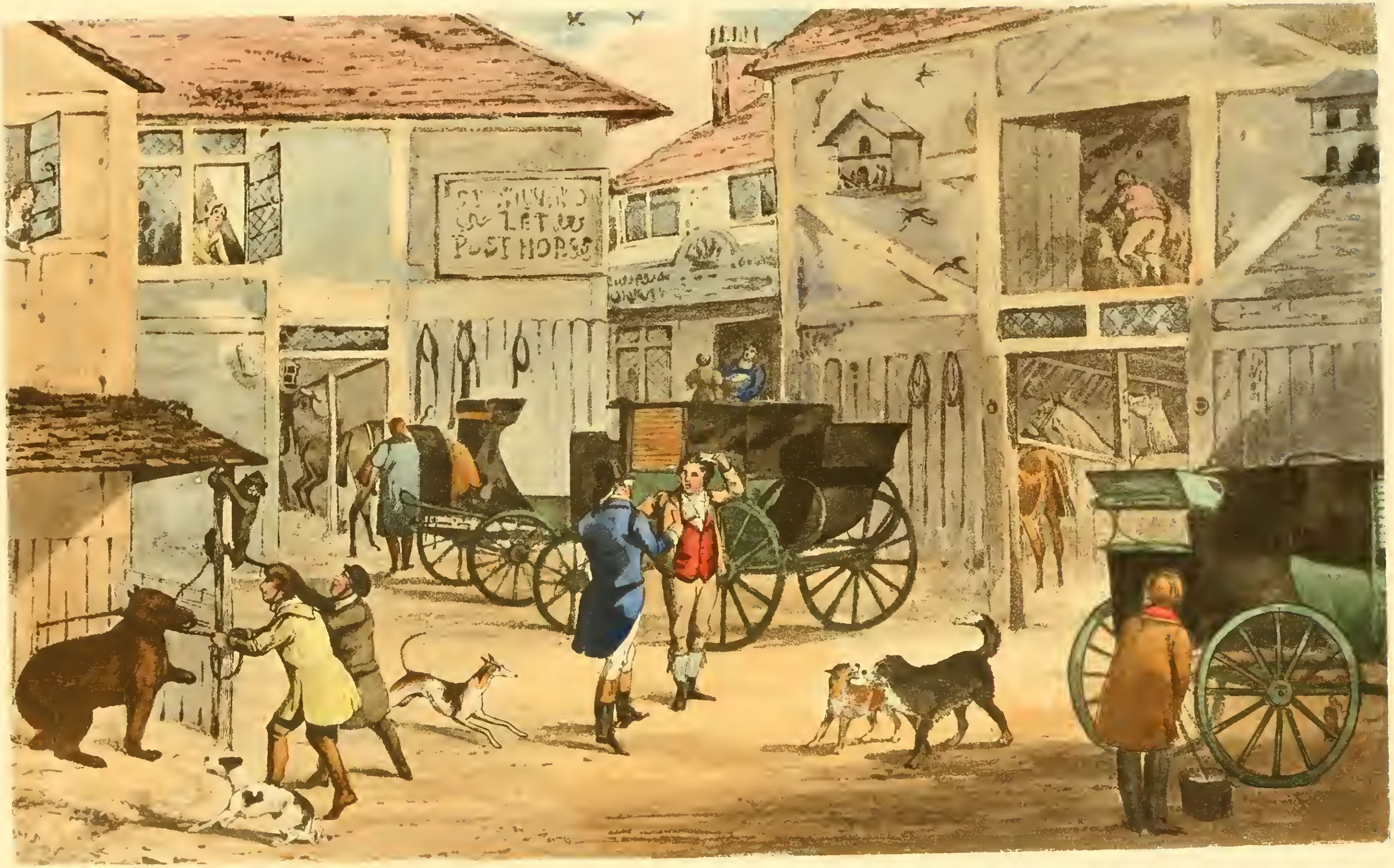
The party assembled on this occasion, and the arrangement of them about the coach, were as follows:—Frank Raby, according to promise, on the box (the word 'bench' was not in use in those days), by the side of his friend; on the roof, Lord Edmonston, Captain Askham, and Hargrave, whom our hero had introduced to his friend, who kindly offered him a seat: inside were two friends of the Baronet's, non-coaching men, and an old and warm relation, who promised to pay for the champagne, both on the course and at dinner, for the four days of the meeting, on condition that he was not upset, either in going or returning.

Now, of the majority of this party it is not necessary to say much. Lord Edmonston, Hargrave, our hero, and his friend, have already been before the public; and the insides, on this occasion, were good and worthy gentlemen in their line, but of no pretensions in ours. There was, however, one conspicuous character on the way-bill, which must not be passed over, inasmuch as his career in life, up to a certain period of it, is, we may presume, without a parallel in the line in which he figured. This is Captain Askham, holding his commission in one of our heavy dragoon regiments, whose history is nearly this:—

At the age of twenty-one, he succeeded to an estate, the clear rental of which was £8000 a year, and a considerable sum of ready money as well, he having been for several years a minor. His passion was, *the road*; he had never less than three, often four, teams at work at the same time; and at one period, when quartered at the distance of nearly 100 miles from London, had the ground absolutely 'covered,' as the term is, among coach proprietors, with his own horses, and amused himself and his friends by driving his coach between London and the town in which he was quartered, whenever his inclination prompted him. The pace, as may be imagined, was an awful one; I allude not to the rate at which the drag travelled, but to that at which the cash found its exit out of the Captain's pocket: for champagne, at sixteen shillings a bottle, was the ordinary 'allowance' on the road, to say nothing for the *et ceteras* in London. But, *nil violentum est perpetuum*, there was soon a stop to those proceedings; and here is the best part of the story, which cannot fail to create a smile. The Captain, like our hero, had a rich uncle, own brother to his father; and having made his fortune in trade, was the more readily alarmed at the accounts he heard of his coaching nephew's proceedings, especially so on finding that his bills and bonds were in the market, with a rumour, now and then, that even expectations from himself, at his decease, were anticipated in his dealings with the money-lending crew.

'Now something must be done,' said the uncle to himself, 'to save this nephew of mine from perdition; perhaps the best step I can take will be to surprise him in his folly, and at once convince him of its consequences.' Acting upon this suggestion, he put himself into the mail; and hearing, on his arrival in London, where his nephew was then domiciled for the week, namely, at a celebrated and most expensive inn, not fifty miles from London, the following *éclaircissement* took place on his entering the stable-yard of the same:—

'Whose coach is that?' said he to a man having the appearance of a helper in a stable. 'Captain Askham's, sir,' was the reply. 'And *that?*' continued the uncle. 'Captain Askham's, sir,' answered the helper. 'And that


LET
POST HORSES

"All Captain Askham's, sir."

break?' 'The Captain's, sir.' 'And that travelling chariot?' 'The Captain's, sir.'

Then turning into a stable in which there were six fine coach-horses—'Whose horses are these?' was the question put to another helper. 'Captain Askham's, sir.' 'And *these?*' resumed the old gentleman, on finding six more in another stable. 'Captain Askham's, sir.' 'And *these?*'—ditto repeated—in a third. 'Captain Askham's, sir.' 'And pray whose *bear* is that?' inquired the uncle of another man, whose path he crossed in the yard. 'Captain Askham's, sir.' 'And the *monkey?*' 'The Captain's, sir.' 'My God!' exclaimed the uncle; 'and pray where is the Captain himself?' 'A-bed, in the house,' answered his informant. 'Let me see him, then,' resumed the old one; 'show me the way to his room.'

The sequel to this story is short. The uncle addressed his nephew with—'I am just come in time to save you from a jail. In six months more you will be in one. I will advance what is requisite to discharge your debts, on your assigning to me the rental of your estate, until they are all liquidated: and, in the meantime, I will allow you two thousand pounds a year.' The Captain consented to this proposal. He retired to his seat in a distant country, 'to *starve,*' as he expressed himself, 'on two thousand a year'; but by good management, the general result of dearly-bought experience, he contrived to live very much like a gentleman, and to indulge himself in his favourite passion for the road, but only to the extent of one coach, and one team of tolerably good greys. In a few years his encumbrances were paid off; he once more became the receiver of his own rents, and no man made a better use than he did of eight thousand a year, cutting his coat according to his cloth, and having nothing more to do with either monkeys or bears.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that this party had not long passed through Hyde Park turnpike, before the subject of *hunting* formed a part of their discourse. It was commenced by Sir John himself, with some questions put to Lord Edmonston, whom he had not seen, until that morning, since the hunting season had concluded.

'Well, Edmonston,' said Sir John, 'what have you been doing this season in Leicestershire? I mean since Christmas, because Somerby, who has been visiting his friends in our part of the world, told me what you had done previously to that time. I dare say you have had good sport, as the season has been open, and there have been no complaints of want of scent.'

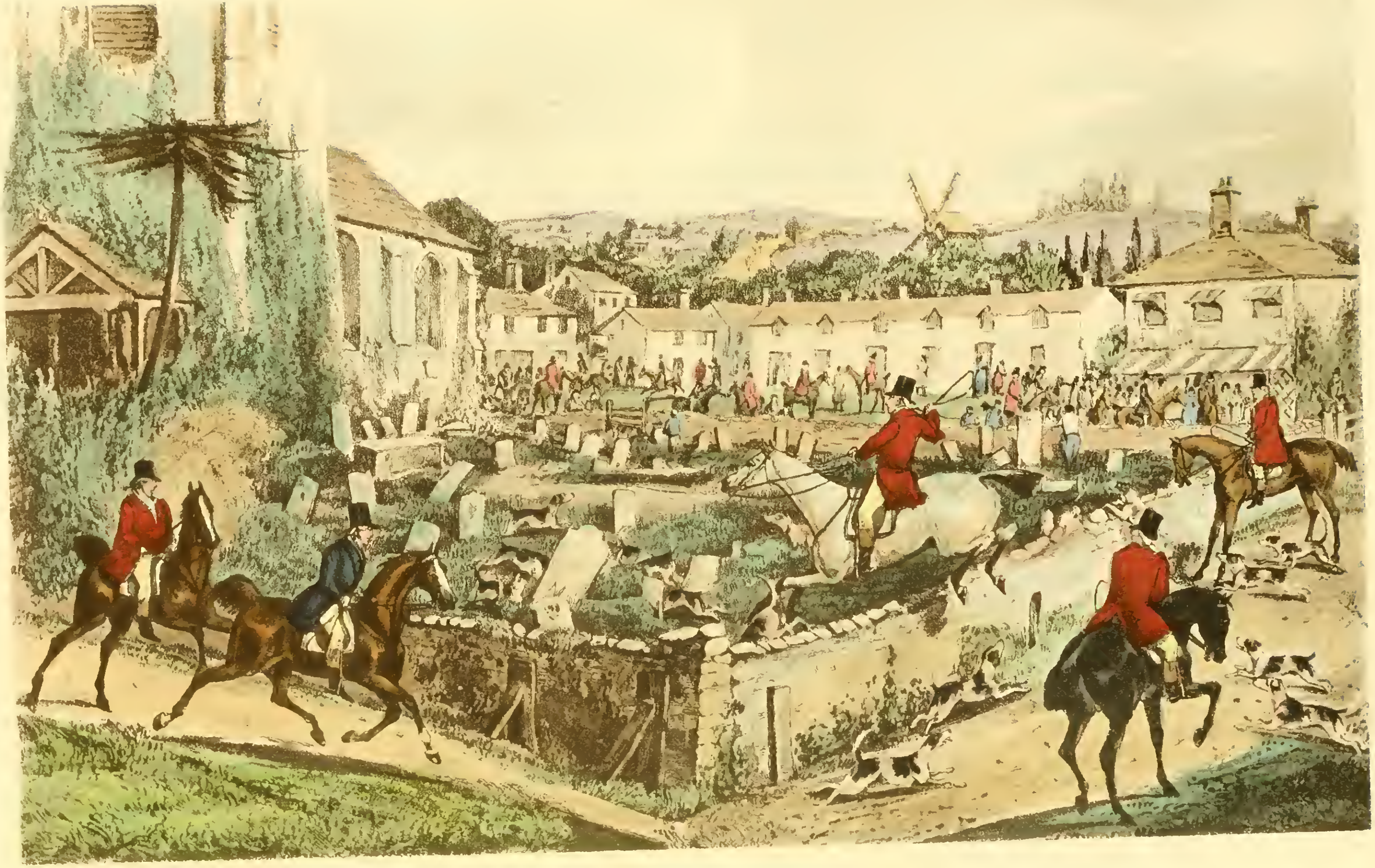
'We have done very well indeed,' replied his lordship, 'and old Meynell has been in high force, having killed forty-one brace of foxes, about his usual amount, and had capital runs with many of them.'

'Perhaps you will give us the history of one of them,' resumed Sir John. 'It will be highly amusing to our two young friends here, giving them an insight into what they hope, one day or another, to partake of.'

'I will do so with pleasure,' was the answer; 'and I think the Shoby Scoales run, on New Year's Day, will answer your purpose well.

'Shoby Scoales is situated in the finest part of Leicestershire; and, being a sure find, the announcement of the fixture always brings out a large field. There was, on this day, a splendid field of horsemen; and, what added to the animating scene, a brilliant display of ladies in carriages and on horseback, the morning being unusually mild for that season of the year.

'At a quarter past ten o'clock, the hounds were thrown into the cover, in which they had not long been before Champion, a favourite old hound, and noted for finding his fox, challenged on a scent, and was instantly cheered by Mr. Meynell. "Have at him, Champion, old boy!" he holloaed; "*you never told me a lie!* Get round to the lower side of the cover, Jack," said he to Jack Jones, the cork-legged whip, "and stop his breaking there, for I want to have a *tickler* to-day." No sooner said than done. The fox broke up wind, and faced our best country, viewed by the whole field. Of course we were all ready for a start, but were kept in check by Meynell taking off his cap and holloaing—"Hold hard, gentlemen; pray let my hounds get fairly out of cover, and settle well to the scent, and *then* ride over them if you can." We were, however, a very short time kept in suspense; for the gallant pack were not only too well bred, but too well taught, to hang in cover after their game had left it. They were soon out in the open, with the scent so good, that, dropping their sterns



"He's among the dead!"

and raising their heads, away they went, at such an awful pace, that we might have safely taken Meynell at his word, and *ridden over them, if we could* have done so. In fact, the first quarter of an hour was so fast, that ten minutes more would have brought us all to a standstill. At Ragdale, however, we came to a check, the hounds having a little overrun the scent, from the fox turning short to the left, which gave our horses some relief. A judicious cast soon put us to rights again, and away we went, at our former speed, to Hoby Town; and straight from thence to Frisby Gorse, where, fortunately, we once again came to a check; for the pace and the country were both awfully severe. Many of the horses, indeed, had already declined, and two received their eternal quietus, from meeting with accidents at fences.

'Our fox hung just long enough in Frisby Gorse to give the horses that were up, second wind, and away we went again, up to Haines's Gorse, near Great Dalby, at a slashing pace; thence, over a splendid country, to Gadsby, when John Raven caught view of him, in a large grass field, with almost every hound close at his brush. He contrived, however, to reach the fence; and, slipping short down wind, got amongst some old farm buildings in a village, and once more brought the pack to check. The scent was again recovered, by some masterly casts of the "old one," who never appeared to greater advantage as a superior judge of fox-hunting, than he did on that day. After forty minutes' cold hunting, we found ourselves close to Queenborough village, with very little apparent chance of again getting near to this most gallant fox, when one of the most singular circumstances occurred that was ever recorded in the annals of English fox-hunting.

'Every one who knows Meynell is aware of his invincible perseverance in doing everything that can be done towards killing his fox: and in this case he was determined not to give the smallest chance away. It occurred to him, that our fox had either got into a drain, or entered some out-building, in the village of Queenborough, which determined him on once more trying to recover him. He, therefore, walked his hounds quietly among the houses, and, as he passed the church, two or three couples of his hounds entered the yard. Amongst these was our friend Champion, who almost instantly threw his tongue on a scent. "*He is among the dead!*" exclaimed Meynell; and, putting his horse to the wall, he rode over it in his usual cool and beautiful style. The fox had actually taken possession of a newly made grave, from out of which he jumped apparently as fresh as when first found; afforded us another burst, exceeded by pace and severity of country only by that from Frisby Gorse to Haines's, in the morning, and quite fast enough to satisfy any one. In fact, he went from Queenborough nearly to Syston; when, crossing the Leicester road, and charging the river Soar in his course, we ran into him close to the windmill on the hill, within a few hundred yards of Mount Sorrel Town; and thus ended one of the finest runs ever seen in that or any other country, it having consisted of every description of hunting, and of every description of difficulties, which could put the goodness and condition of hounds, the science of their huntsman, the bottom of the horses, and the nerves and judgment of their riders, to the test.

'Were I to relate all the disasters and casualties that occurred on this memorable day,' resumed Lord Edmonston, 'I should make my story too long; and I wish I could conclude it without stating that several horses died in consequence of it. I must, however, mention one circumstance relating to the far-famed master of the pack. After we had been going for at least three-quarters of an hour, and at the best pace, with our horses not a little the worse for it, all of us who were up with the hounds at that moment made for the corner of a large grass-field, near Dalby, which was surrounded by an immense ox-fence, and particularly strong in that one particular part. We were assured, however, that the gate in the corner would open, and this by that good old sportsman, Henton of Hoby, who said he had passed through it that morning; but we found, to our cost, there was no longer a gate there. It had been broken to pieces by some bullocks, and replaced with a flight of rails so high and so strong as to bring all the leading men to a standstill. In fact, we were turning away from it in despair, looking for a practicable place in the ox-fence, when Meynell, mounted on his famous old grey horse, came up; and, without breaking his stride, leaped it in the most beautiful style imaginable, leaving us all in the lurch, for a time, not one having the nerve to follow him, although the hounds were a field or two a-head, running with a breast-high scent at the time.'[1]

With the exception of the Captain, who cared nothing about hounds, and whose attention was chiefly attracted to the movements of the four greys, and the masterly style in which they were handled by their driver, this interesting description of a run with Mr. Meynell's hounds, together with the extraordinary incidents which occurred in it, was listened to with much delight; more especially by the two young ones, who glanced a significant look at each other, towards the conclusion of it, as much as to say, '*That is the country, and those are the hounds for us.*' Sir John, indeed, began to reflect whether he were not pursuing a losing game by keeping six hunters in his own country instead of twice six in Leicestershire, and enjoying fox-hunting *in perfection.* But there were reasons which more than counterbalanced this very strong inducement on his part. Independently of a wish to reside on his own property, in compliance with the death-bed request of his father, his passion for the road quite equalled that for the chase, and for this purpose he could nowhere be so well situated as at home, for reasons that have already been detailed.

But to return to the journey down the road. The first stop was at Hounslow, where, according to the usage of those days —slow compared with the present — the bearing reins were let down, and the noses of the horses plunged into a bucket of cold water, with a swallow or two each, and most refreshing must it have been to them, after toiling through ten miles of dust, for there were no watered roads in those days. A glass of sherry and a biscuit were also partaken of by the party, and onward they proceeded towards the course. At the point at which the roads branch off—just outside of the town of Hounslow—the Baronet exclaimed, pointing to the Oxford finger-post:—

'That is my old road. There are *my* old associations'; and, turning himself round towards Hargrave, and afterwards towards his young friend on the box, he added, 'there, no doubt, are yours also. There stands the "Magpies" on the heath, where I first milked the bull, and there is to be seen Jack Bailey, my faithful friend and preceptor, coming up with his coach; and an out-and-out coachman he is. And next, old

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[1] This is a fact.

Baldwin of Slough, whose books were always as open to me as his house, whose tick was as good as his wine was bad. Then, passing by Eton—for I was sick of that place, and all its host of learned tyrants—what can beat old Shrubb,[1] at Benson, and a good dinner in No. 3? But I am not going to stop there. Can I forget Christchurch, and the happy days I passed within its walls? They never have been surpassed by any others, and I more than doubt whether they ever will be. I am now, however, travelling in a new direction, and shall meet with none but new faces on the road. But so it is: and there are the nags all ready for us in the street, and we will change quickly, that we may get a good place on the course.'

Not ten minutes had elapsed before they were off again, having ordered a dinner at the 'Bush' to be ready for them on their return, some particular dishes having been bespoke by the *insides*. 'What a splendid team you have got here, Inkleton,' said the Captain, as they threw themselves into their collars, in ascending the hill out of Egham, appearing to regard the weight of the carriage and its contents as nothing more than was just necessary to the full development of their great powers and form. In fact, on the flat between the two towns, it was as much as Sir John could do to restrain their ardour, so redundant did they feel themselves of high keep and mettle.

'They ought to be good,' replied the Baronet; 'those leaders cost me two hundred guineas apiece, and the wheelers more than two-thirds of that sum. There will be nothing on the road to-day that can touch them, if they would settle down to the trot, but, from the effect of the excitement of a race-course, so new to them, there is little chance of their doing so. All I can hope for, is, that they will not break away with me, on our return from the ground; but I have little fear of it, as my tackle is good.'

On entering Windsor great park—one of the grandest the world can show—the conversation was resumed about Eton, whose 'antique towers' were now visible to the party; and to those who had been educated there some old associations presented themselves.

'Yonder is the old shop,' said the Baronet to Hargrave.

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[1] The landlord's name, at the head inn.

'Yes,' replied Hargrave, 'and I never wish to be nearer to it than I now am.'

'Nor I neither,' observed Frank Raby.

'I have no great fancy for the place myself,' added the Baronet, 'but I should like to see old Stevens and Jack Hall once more.'

'By the bye,' resumed Hargrave, 'did you hear of the good bit of luck Jack Hall dropped into the other day?'

On the Baronet replying in the negative, Hargrave thus related the story:—

'When Hobart left school, at Christmas, the Doctor and his tutor, from a knowledge of the large possessions that awaited him on his majority, of course expected a very handsome *pouch*; and it is not improbable that the amount had been duly communicated to, and approved of by, the latter. Whether the Doctor was popular with Hobart is extremely problematical; but that a certain person, named Jack Hall, was highly so, there was no room to doubt. The money for the *pouch*, then, arrived in a letter to Hobart himself, the distribution of which involved him in no small difficulty. The result, however, was this:—On the one hand, the chief educational assistance he had received from the Doctor consisted of manifold unmerciful floggings, and without being much the better for them; whereas, on the other, through the affectionate assiduities of Jack Hall, he had been rendered a match for any man on the Thames, in the use of a casting-net, or the management of a boat or a punt; and could heel and handle a cock with all the dexterity of a professor. In point of fact, it was a simple case of flogging *versus* cock-fighting, net-casting, and boating. Taking into consideration, then, the 'value received' from either party, and, after the most mature deliberation, Hobart decided that the money ought to be divided in equal portions between the three—the Doctor, the private tutor, and the professor of arts and sciences, which Jack Hall must be allowed to be. And now for the finale. This upright division of the money would never have been known to the family had they not chanced to have been made acquainted with it through an unlooked-for channel, when all was put straight between the parties. The deficiency to the pedagogues was rectified, as it ought to have been; but Jack retained his share, on the well-known principle of his profession—that all was fish which came into his net.

The former—the pedagogues—returned suitable acknowledgments for all favours. The Doctor presented Hobart with a splendidly bound edition of the moral Lucretius; and Jack Hall invited him, with his friends, to a flash dinner "up town."'

'Capital!' exclaimed the Captain; 'we had none of that work at Harrow; but I think, from my experience of them, most schoolmasters would get monkey's allowance if left to the generosity of their pupils alone to reward them, although I do not see why they should; as, after all, they only do their duty towards them, although many of them are, like young coachmen, too fond of the whip. As for myself, I had rather be a horse-keeper to the Holyhead mail than a schoolmaster; and does not somebody say, "*Quem Jupiter odit pedagogum facit*"? But, Inkleton, when speaking of Oxford, and the fun you had there in our time, you appear to have forgotten Jem Howell, and the "Birmingham Day," one of the best of his order, out of the University, and Costar's favourite servant.'

'Forget Jem Howell!' exclaimed the Baronet; 'you might as well suppose I should forget to eat my dinner to-day at the "Bush." I consider Jem quite a pattern-card of a stage-coachman, both in figure and dress; and he appears as if he were made on purpose to meet a north-east wind, with the thermometer at zero, over those Oxfordshire hills. Then, what a voice he has!—what an eye!—in fact, what an expressive countenance throughout, under that broad-brimmed hat!'

'That was not much amiss of Jem, the other day,' said Hargrave, 'respecting the new Bishop of Oxford. "I wish they'd gin (given) it *Oolly*," said Jem (the gentleman's name was *Woolley*); "he'd have made a rare bishop, for he's not only a scholard, but a gemman, and that's more than can be said of all on 'em. They tells me scholardship opens men's minds; it may be so, but it shuts their purses devilish close—at least I find it so on this road. I never remember getting more than one shilling from a passenger in black, in a shovel hat, but once since I have drove this coach." But it is Jem's very dry manner of expressing himself,' resumed Hargrave, 'that gives a zest to these trifling stories; in fact, they would not be worth repeating without it. I saw an old woman go up to him, the other morning, in Oxford, and say to him, "Be you a-going to Brummagem to-day, Master Howell?" "No, ma'am," replied

Jem; "but I shall go half-way there, and my fellow-servant will take you the other half if you want to go there; but mind ye, ma'am (looking upwards towards the sky), *if it don't rain.*" "And will it rain, Master Howell?" asked the silly old woman. "There is only *one* person in the world, ma'am, that can answer that question," replied Jem, "and I ar'n't he."'[1]

'He booked his passenger, I conclude,' observed Frank Raby.

'Of course he did,' resumed Hargrave; 'for Jem never throws a chance away; and I saw a good scene with him, in that respect, last term. It being a very wet morning, a passenger put his head out of one of the windows of the "Angel Inn," and said, "Where is the coachman of the Birmingham Day?"

'"I be here, at your sarvice, sir," answered Jem, who was buckling his reins, at the moment, just ready to mount his box and be off.

'"Put some straw on the foot-board, on my side of the box," resumed the gentleman.

'"Beg pardon, sir," continued Jem; "but I never allows no straw on my foot-board."

'"You are an insolent scoundrel!" exclaimed the gentleman.

'"This, sir, is not the first time I have been told so," resumed Jem; "but the fact is, I have a mare at wheel, in this here coach, that, if one single straw touched her tail, would kick you off the box in about two seconds; and here is my master, who will vouch for the truth of what I have been saying."'

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[1] This anecdote can only be appreciated by those who are aware of the troublesome, stupid questions put by the travelling public to road-coachmen. This woman knew Howell drove the Oxford and Birmingham day coach six days in the week, as well as he himself did; so that the question was put merely for the sake of asking it, as many others are. Howell's questions, on the other hand, were always to the point; and that put to his master, Mr. Costar, relating to the coach he had so long been driving, is a fair sample:—'*Do you think, sir, my coach would be missed on the road if it did not start to-day?*' Mr. Costar agreed with Jem in thinking it would not; and it stopped. The fact was, the coaches running throughout, from London to Birmingham, in a day, took most of its passengers. It is much to be lamented that there is no portrait of this excellent servant and true specimen of the old road-coachman, an order of men soon only to be known to have existed. He died worth £10,000, and as one proof of the estimation in which his character as a confidential and honest servant was held, Mr. Ansley, of Bletchington Park, kept a horse in Oxford for his use in the summer; and a knife and fork were always at his service in the steward's room at Bletchington, on Sundays, the year round.

To attempt to detail the events of a race meeting, so far back as the one to which I am now alluding, would be considered a trespass on the reader; suffice it to say, that all went off with *éclat,* as far as the sport on the course was concerned; and as the champagne of the week was paid for by the warm old gentleman inside, all went on well with the drag. The party arrived each night at Stevens's Hotel as the clock struck eleven, so exactly did the Baronet keep his time; and both men and horses appeared the better for their four days of inhaling clear country air.

But what impression did the events of the week make upon the youngsters of this party—Frank Raby and Hargrave? Upon the latter, not much. His heart and soul were wrapped up in fox-hunting, and 'closely stopped,' as fox-hunters say, against the intrusion of meaner pursuits, amongst which he reckoned racing. Not so, however, with our hero. He appeared to enter into the spirit of each individual race with an interest that attracted notice; and, on the third day, was seen taking some bets in the ring, although only to a trifling amount; and most of these, as might be expected, he lost. But his speculations did not end with the turf. The introduction of the thimble-rig tables had just then commenced, and Hargrave and himself were amongst the earliest victims to their unfairness.

'What!' said one to the other, 'can that simple-looking country bumpkin, in a smock-frock, find out the pea, and neither you nor I be able to do the same? Why, he has won seven guineas already from the rascals, and how I should like to break them, for they look very much like thieves.'

'There will be no difficulty in it,' observed the other; 'I see the pea every time, and I am quite sure I can always tell the thimble it is under. We will risk five guineas apiece, and I'll warrant it we'll soon double our stakes."

But they were interrupted in their course by a by-stander, who overheard them, and who, apparently in compassion to their simplicity, thus ventured to address them:—

'Excuse me, young gentlemen,' said he, 'but you have formed a wrong judgment as to the proceedings you have just been witness of. That simple-looking country bumpkin, in the smock-frock, is one of the partners in the table, as well as one of the greatest thieves in London. He is acting the part of a decoy, and you will be sure to fall into his net, if you risk your money on the tables.'

The youngsters thanked their unknown friend, and kept their money in their pockets. He also cautioned them against playing at the various Rouge et Noir and E. O. tables on the course, assuring them they were all unfair, and that they would not have a chance to win at them. It was discovered, afterwards, that it was one of the police-officers of Bow-street who had acted this friendly part, having seen the young gentlemen come on to the course with Sir John Inkleton, to whom he owed a debt of gratitude, for a kind act done by him, in getting him put on the establishment, through the intercession of one of his relations.

During the four days of the meeting, Frank Raby and his host never chanced to meet. When the one came home at night, the other had not returned from his club—for he was a member of both Brooks's and White's—and when the nephew started for Ascot in the morning, the uncle was asleep in his bed. The first time, however, that they met, which was on the fifth morning, at the breakfast-table, the following conversation occurred:—

'Well, Frank,' said Mr. Raby, 'I hope you have enjoyed yourself at Ascot.'

'Very much indeed,' was the reply. 'Sir John did the thing capitally.'

'Sir John did the thing!' repeated the uncle. 'What do you mean by that? I thought your object was to see the entire proceedings of an Ascot race meeting, which, I have reason to believe, is the pleasantest and most aristocratic in the world. But you seem to bestow all the credit on Inkleton, who certainly is a very——'

'I only meant to say,' interrupted Frank, 'that Sir John did the thing in the most coachmanlike style, and his turnout was uncommonly admired on the road. The fine coachmanship, also, which he exhibited, in twisting his horses right and left, and threading the carriages as he did, at the rate of eight or ten miles in the hour, and never touching one of them! And then the coachmanlike manner in which everything was done; the changing of the horses, and the scientific way in which they were put to the coach.'

'*Scientific!*' smiled the uncle; 'ridiculous, to be sure; but really, Frank, it is somewhat of a melancholy reflection, that, after all the money expended on Inkleton's education, and with really good parts, which he has, he should now pride himself upon nothing so much as being a first-rate coachman. Surely he did not imbibe such ambition from reading the classics.'

'Perhaps not, sir,' said our hero, a little petulantly, standing up for his patron and friend. 'But please to recollect, uncle, that one of the best of them advises us, with his own usual good taste, not to condemn the taste of others any more than to extol that of ourselves. "*Nec tua laudabis studia, nec aliena reprendes*"; and, moreover, if the Athenians, the most polished nation of all antiquity, deemed it an honour to be considered skilful charioteers, why should Englishmen consider it a disgrace? Again;—have not their poets divided the honour of the charioteer with the hero who fights in the chariot? Does not Homer make his Nestor the wisest man, *and the best coachman* of his day? Does he not make Priam put his own horses, *with his own hands*, to the car in which himself and the herald demand the body of Hector? Is he not, indeed, blamed by one of his commentators for dwelling upon the description of Juno's chariot, when his reader expects him to lead him into the thick of the battle?

"For why should Homer deck the gorgeous car,
When our raised souls are anxious for the war?
Or dwell on every wheel, when loud alarms,
And Mars, in thunder, call the host to arms?"

And is he not so minutely faithful to this part of his subject, that, at the games of Patroclus, he represents Menelaus borrowing one of the horses of Agamemnon—a horse called Æthe (here the uncle smiled, as much as to say: I wish your recollection was as good on all points, as upon this)—to put to his chariot with his own, on account of his superior action, no doubt. Has not the greatest poet that ever dipped pen in ink immortalised the coachman in song—ay, even in letters of pure gold? Turning, then, to the Romans; can anything be finer than Juvenal's description, in his eleventh satire, of the excitement created in Rome by the various chariot races at the Circensian games, which passage has been so admirably translated by Congreve:—

"This day, all Rome (if I may be allowed,
Without offence to such a numerous crowd,

To say 'all Rome') will in the circus sweat:
Echoes already to their shouts repeat;
Methinks I hear the cry—*Away! away!*
The green has won the honour of the day.
Oh! should the sports be for one year forborne,
Rome would, in tears, her loved diversion mourn;
And that would now a cause of sorrow yield,
Great as the loss of Cannæ's fatal field."

Did not Lateranus, the consul, drive his own chariot by night, and, when the year of his office was out, publicly in the streets of Rome, by day?

'But really, uncle, joking apart—for I have seen you smile at my panegyric on ancient coachmen—I think you must admit that the fashion for gentlemen driving their own coaches, which is now becoming so prevalent, will, in time, do much good. It has caused them to notice and take under their protection public, or "road-coachmen," as they are called, a most useful body of men, "scientific" in their calling—you may smile at the epithet, and yet it is their due—who will be much the better for coming more in collision with their superiors, and receiving, whilst imparting, instruction. It is quite evident, and I have heard not only my father, but Dr. Chapman and Mr. Egerton say, the coachmen on our road are wonderfully improved since Sir John and the Hon. Mr. Conolly have been so much at work amongst them with their own teams. The latter, indeed, has put together and published a few general maxims, not only relating to their situation and practice, as coachmen, but to their conduct as men; and they will, no doubt, be the means of saving the lives of many persons who travel in the course of the year. Now, if he were not himself a coachman, he could not have done this—at least with any effect.'

'Certainly not, I admit,' replied Mr. Raby, 'any more than Æschylus could have celebrated the triumphs of his country on the stage so perfectly as he has done, had he not fought and bled on the plains of Marathon; for I suppose I must be *classical* here as well as yourself. But tell me, Frank, do you mean to be an amateur coachman, as well as a fox-hunter?'

'I should like it,' answered Frank, 'if my means allowed me, but not else; for we should pay too dear for any pleasure, I should think, if it brings us into pecuniary difficulties.'

'Good, my dear Frank,' resumed the uncle; 'these are honeyed words of yours to my ears.'

'Why, you know, uncle, coaching can be enjoyed for six months in the year, in which there is no hunting; and I should like never to be quite idle, if I could help it. I think lounging away one's time, at a watering-place, in the summer, must be poor fun for a young man; besides, the having a team of one's own affords opportunities of dispensing much pleasure amongst our friends and acquaintances.'

'And what think you of racing, now you have seen it in perfection?' asked the uncle, with some expression of anxiety on his countenance.

'I like racing much,' replied Frank; 'as Mr. Egerton says, "it is a stimulus, acting on the generous ambition of men and horses, and, as regards the latter, most serviceable to the country; but only a fit pursuit for persons of large means"; consequently it will be out of my power to indulge myself in it. As an object of gain, I think very lightly of it; I have been told there is no instance on record of a *gentleman* getting money by it, on the long-run; and we have one instance to the contrary, at this time, at Christchurch; at least, there is a very good fellow, by the name of Fairfax, who says he shall be £100,000 a worse man for his father having been all his life on the turf.'

Mr. Raby looked serious at the conclusion of these remarks; but there was something in the expression of his features which implied dissatisfaction, if not disgust, at the idea of a young man, who had gone through Eton school, laying his account in driving four horses on a turnpike road—in which the most ignorant fellow in the country might excel him—as a means of employment in after life: or, to use his nephew's words, to prevent his lounging away his time in idleness, at some watering-place, in the summer. He remained silent, however, perhaps from the recollection of the little use he himself had made of a first-rate education, and of first-rate talents as well.

The arrival of the postman with some letters put an end to the conversation. One of them was from Mr. Raby to his brother, who read the following extract from it to his nephew:—'Frank has informed me of the pleasant manner in which he has passed his time in London, Ascot, etc.; and likewise of the high treat you afforded him, by asking those Leicestershire sportsmen to meet him at dinner. As for Ascot, the less practical information he brings with him from thence, the better, for it is not my wish that he should attain a relish for the turf; but, as he is bent on being a fox-hunter, I am glad you have exhibited to him, in the person of your Melton friends, some of the best specimens of that class of men. I knew Mountford's father well, and there was no better man; and I hear an excellent account of Lord Edmonston, from an old friend of his mother, who visited me lately. Of Raymond I know nothing but from what I see of him in the newspapers, as the owner of a good stud of race-horses, and a successful gentleman jockey at Bibury and other places. His being an acquaintance of yours, however, is a guarantee for everything that is correct; for there must be something in a man beyond being a mere sportsman, to give him access to your table. These are the sort of men, then, that I wish Frank to be acquainted with; and as I hear very good accounts of him, it is not improbable that he may, one of these days, know a little more of them, by accepting Somerby's invitation to spend a month at Melton Mowbray, and see "the cream of the thing" with foxhounds, under the direction of the famous Meynell, which, I flatter myself, he has seen with harehounds, under the management of your humble servant. You must be aware that the expenses of a trip of this sort would be considerable, and, under general circumstances, somewhat unjustifiable, as regards a younger brother; but you must also be aware that, beyond the expenses of his education, and the purchase of a few books, Andrew costs me nothing. His pony is all that he requires; and his sister tells me he must be saving money out of his annual allowance. Now, as our grandfather and father were both sportsmen, and I have myself some pretensions to the appellation, I should wish Frank to become one, and be somewhat conspicuous as such, for which I think he is qualified. As for his passion for driving coaches, that will most likely wear away; he imbibed it from Inkleton, who is an excellent person withal, and certainly has done much good in his neighbourhood, in liberalising—at all events, humanising—a set of men, I mean coachmen and guards, by coming so much into collision with them on their own ground. It seems the "passion for the ribbons," as it is called, is very much gaining ground; that it is encouraged by the Prince; that his friend Sir John Lade has, at this time, seventeen chestnut coach-horses, with whole legs, in his stable! and that a regular driving club is in agitation, patronised by John Warde, Prouse, Oakover, Bamfylde, and some others, who are great patrons of the road. Prouse, I hear, has already composed a song for the occasion, in which every individual coachman, guard, and horsekeeper, between London and Exeter, is introduced by name and character. I fancy I see you smile; neither can I avoid doing so myself, at the recollection of such absurdity; but there is no harm in it, after all: *au contraire*, they say, good will be the result If so, *floreat Auriga*.'

'Well, Frank,' observed the uncle, 'I know not whether I am not myself of the same opinion with your father. We have to thank an amateur of "the ribbons," as you call amateur coachmen, for the present improved mode of conveying our mails. I allude to Mr. Palmer, who suggested that they should be carried by coaches, drawn by four horses, contracted for by Government, and guarded, instead of in the old mode by a boy on horseback; and his plan was carried into effect in 1784. He assured ministers that Government would be put to a very little additional expense, inasmuch as the coach proprietors would have a strong inducement to contract for conveying the mails at a cheap rate, on account of the additional recommendation to passengers their coaches would thereby acquire, in point of security, regularity, and despatch. Strange to say, however, although Government approved of this plan, and the public in general were satisfied of its utility, yet, like all new schemes, however beneficial they may promise to be, it met with a strong opposition in some quarters. It was represented by a number of the oldest and ablest officers and clerks in the post-office, not only as impracticable, but dangerous. Notwithstanding this opposition, powerful as we may suppose it to have been, it was at length established, and gradually extended to different parts of the kingdom, chiefly by the exertions of country gentlemen, who took an interest in the coaches which were running on the various roads in their neighbourhood. It soon appeared that not only was the revenue improved by the introduction of this system, but that a prodigious saving of time was the effect of it. For example: previously to the extension of it to Scotland, the mails were eighty-two hours on the road from London to

Edinburgh, and eighty-five from Edinburgh to London; and, subsequently, the time has been shortened to sixty-two in each case.'

'I am happy to hear this account from you,' observed the nephew, 'and I will retail it to Sir John when I see him; but will you have the kindness to inform me when the conveyance of letters by post, as the term is, commenced in the world? I have often heard the subject discussed, but never satisfactorily so.'

'You have imposed a task upon me,' answered the uncle, 'that I scarcely know how to perform; but I imagine the case to have been something like this:—

'In the early periods of society, communication between the different parts of a country must always be rare and difficult: individuals, at a distance, had little occasion for mutual intercourse; and, when such communication was found necessary, special messengers were employed. As order and civilisation advanced, occasions for correspondence multiplied. The sovereign, for instance, found it requisite to transmit orders and laws to every part of his kingdom; and for this purpose he made use of messengers, or "couriers," as they are now called, to whom he committed the charge of forwarding his despatches. But, without stations in the way, where could these messengers find refreshment for either themselves or their horses? Experience soon pointed out the necessity of ensuring such accommodation, by erecting, upon all the great roads, houses, or stations, where the messengers might stop, as occasion required, and where, for their still greater convenience, relays of horses were kept in readiness, to enable them to pursue their journey with uninterrupted despatch. Thus, these houses were called *posts*, and the messenger who made use of them was dignified by the appellation of a *post*. Though, at first, the institution was, no doubt, intended solely for the use of the sovereign and the necessities of the state, yet, by degrees, individuals, seeing the benefit resulting from it, availed themselves of the opportunity to carry on their own correspondence, and for which they willingly paid a certain rate to the sovereign. Thus a post-office, of some kind or other, gradually came to be established in every civilised country, although we find Cicero lamenting the absence of one in Italy, in his time. Still they can be traced, I believe, as far back as the ancient Persians. Xenophon, indeed, tells us they were invented by Cyrus, on his Scythian expedition, about 500 years before Christ; that the station-houses were sumptuously built, with accommodations for many men and horses; and that every courier, on his arrival, was obliged to communicate his despatches to the postmaster, by whom they were immediately forwarded again. Herodotus mentions the singular fact that, from the shore of the Ægean Sea to Susa the capital, there were 111 stages for posts, each a day's journey distant from the preceding.

'It does not, I believe, clearly appear,' continued Mr. Raby, 'in what manner, or when, posts were established among the ancient Greeks; and, although they are known to have existed among the ancient Romans, it is difficult to trace the period of their introduction among either. Suetonius, however, assures us that Augustus instituted posts along all the great roads of the empire; and it is also asserted that they were known in the days of the republic, when posts, and post-stations, called *statores* and *stationes*, were established by the senate. The epistolary correspondence of antiquity, however, was probably at no period so extensive as to require or maintain post-offices on the footing of modern posts for the mere conveyance of letters. It is in later times only, when the extension of commerce gave occasion to frequent communication, that those establishments are to be found complete. The institution of them in modern history appears to be in the year 807, by the Emperor Charlemagne, but we hear little of their being regularly established in England until the time of James the First. In the time of Charles the First, rates of postage were fixed; and it is rather a curious fact, that the allowance to postmasters on the road, for horses employed in these posts, was fixed at twopence-halfpenny per mile; which is, I believe, the exact sum now paid to the proprietors of our mail coaches for conveying the letter-bags. These posts, however, extended then only to a few of the principal roads.'

'And can you tell me when travelling by the use of post-horses commenced,' asked Frank, 'for I lately heard a dissertation on that subject, which came to no satisfactory conclusion?'

'At what period the public of any country commenced travelling post, as the term is, is difficult now to decide.

Post-horses are mentioned in the Theodosian code (*de cursu publico*), but I doubt whether any use could be made of them, except by persons travelling in the service of the state. At all events, I remember Pliny found himself compelled to ask permission of his government to avail himself of their services to carry his sick wife. In the year 1548, horses for *riding posts* were let out in England at a penny per mile; but when posting by carriages commenced, it is not in my power to determine. I think somewhere about the same time, although to a very limited extent. It is, indeed, only within these last twenty years that English gentlemen have desisted from the practice of what is termed riding post from their country seats to London, good hackneys being provided for themselves and servants on the roads.'

'And not a bad way of travelling,' observed Frank; 'next to a seat on a coach-box, behind good horses, I should prefer it to any other.'

'Very good,' resumed the uncle, 'for gentlemen of a certain age, and of certain personal dimensions; but it would hardly have suited me. It was all very well, however, for *gentlemen* to travel in this way, because they could go just as far in the course of the day as they felt inclined to do; and no doubt but, by the change in the action of the muscles, the result of changing the horses, they could travel a long way without feeling fatigued, if in the previous habit of fast riding. But there is one practice amongst our noblemen and country gentlemen which they carry to the verge of cruelty. I allude to their making their servants ride post-horses, after their carriages, when they travel post, and often to the extent of from 200 to 300 miles, with very little intermission. This is a system that ought to be done away with, and no doubt will soon be remedied, as it is calling too severely on the personal exertions of servants.'[1]

'Allow me to ask you,' said Frank, 'now that we are on the subject of the *road*, what distance of ground ought to be implied by the word *mile*, for I have heard many disputes on the subject?'

'A dispute on this subject,' replied Mr. Raby, 'is immediately settled by a reference to different countries. An English statute mile is eighty chains, or 1760 yards, that is, 5280 feet; but reckoning in geometrical paces (60,000 of which make a degree of the equator), it stands thus in relation to that of other European countries; England, 1200 paces; Scotland and Ireland, 1500; Italy, 1000; Russia, 750; Germany, 4000; Hungary, 6000. Thus, a friend of mine, travelling in Germany, arrived in a town, at the edge of night, by a diligence, on his road to visit a friend; and on being informed that his house was only a "mile distant," he set off to walk. Guess his surprise, then, on finding that he had to walk nearly four miles of the measure of his own country. There were no less than four distinct French leagues, varying from 1500 to 3000 paces; neither of them, I believe, adopted now. Nevertheless, ask twenty Frenchmen what is the extent of a modern French league? and nineteen of the twenty will be unable to tell you. It is generally supposed to be 3000 geometrical paces, or three English miles, but I believe the case to be this:—twenty-five French leagues make seventy miles, which renders the length of ground five miles less, in that given number of leagues, than if the leagues were exactly three English miles. Then, again, among the ancient Romans there was the like confusion respecting this measure of distance, commonly called a mile. It was generally expressed by the words *mille passus*, a thousand feet; but the extent of it is by no means defined. One author makes it to consist of seven stadia; Plutarch, little short of eight; Strabo and Polybius, just eight. The reason of this discordance seems to be, the difference between the Grecian and the Roman foot, the first-named being the greatest. The Romans, however, had a stone ("lapis")—which we call the "mile-stone," at the end of each mile, the number marked on it denoting the distance from Rome. Augustus, indeed, erected a gilt pillar in the forum of that city, at which all the public roads, or "ways," of Italy, distinguished by stones, were terminated; and the same was afterwards done in the provinces. Hence the traveller would find *tertius lapis* on one denoting three; *centesimus lapis*, a hundred miles, etc.'

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[1] It is scarcely necessary to observe, the placing rumbles, or dickeys, on the hinder part of gentlemen's carriages has caused the abandonment of this system of servants riding post.

CHAPTER VIII

Rural life in hall and field: a ball and a wound (consequences alike common in love and war).

THE period of our hero's brief visit to the metropolis of all that is gay and voluptuous having expired, he set out again for Amstead Abbey, where his arrival was hailed with joy by all parties, and by none more than Jem Perren and the huntsman. But Frank Raby came under the denomination of 'one whom everybody likes,' a characteristic which, indeed, he preserved to the last day of his life.

Shortly after his return to the Abbey, a grand entertainment was given by a neighbouring Baronet—intended to have been given under the canopy of heaven, in his beautiful grounds; but a shower of rain making its appearance—which caused his lady to declare she had a great mind to go and live in that country where no rain falls—the company adjourned to the mansion-house, which had ample means of accommodating them. A ball, at night, was the result, and as it was the first at which our hero had appeared since he had assumed the manly gown, he was an object of some interest in the assembly.

'What a fine young man Frank Raby is become!' was the remark overheard in one quarter.

'He has a very manly appearance, in addition to his good looks,' was whispered in another.

'How like a gentleman he looks!' in a third.

'There appears to be no affectation about him,' in a fourth.

'God never made a coxcomb worth a groat,' muttered a gouty old gentleman, who overheard the last encomium; 'there never was a bad Raby yet, and I think Frank will keep up the charter, as well as his brother Andrew.'

'Oh!' remarked a fair lady, who had two daughters in the room, '*I* think Andrew is superior of the two. It is true, his health is delicate, and requires care, but he is a most amiable young man, and of a more intellectual turn of mind than his younger brother. For my own part, I do not know whether or not I exactly like Frank Raby; I think his father has acted wrong in letting him be so much with Sir John Inkleton, who, we know, although a good-hearted young man, has some strange propensities, and is also very extravagant. I am told he spends a thousand a year amongst coachmen and guards, and I hear that he has made Frank Raby as fond of coach-driving and fox-hunting as he himself is. If Frank were the elder, instead of the younger, brother, all this would not be so material; but as his chief dependence, to pursue such expensive pleasures, is on his uncle, I wish he may not place it on a broken staff. I know Mr. Beaumont Raby well, and surely a person of his high literary attainments, and great personal accomplishments, and living in such good London society, must think very lightly of all such pursuits. I have, indeed, heard him say as much as that he wished both his nephews to distinguish themselves at Oxford, if not to carry honours (which you know was his own case), and then to assume high stations in the senate (which you know was, unfortunately, *not* his case, not from want of ability, but from a natural and insuperable indolence) when they make their appearance in the world. As to my valued friend, Lady Charlotte, I am quite sure she is much pained at the accounts she hears of Frank's hunting and riding; and Andrew told my daughter Jane, the other day, that he has already been in scrapes, connected with them, at Oxford.'

'All very fine theory of yours, my dear madam,' said the gouty old gentleman, 'but doings and sayings are wide apart. No one knows Beaumont Raby much better than I do, and no one esteems some parts of his character more. All know his literary, as well as his personal, accomplishments to be of the first order; at the same time, where can we find, in proportion to his means, a much more useless member of society? It is true, he sends his money to Italy, to enrich a country which owns him not as her son, and thereby may be said to encourage the fine arts: but, with the exception of the benefit arising from the necessary disbursement of his fine income, what good does he do for his own? With talents which might have made him one of the resources of his country, he sits by.

and looks on at the difficulties that oppose it, all his energies being relaxed and absorbed in what may be called the effeminacy of refinement. But why all this? Merely because he was averse, from his youth, to those manly pursuits which you condemn, and which he now finds out, though too late, would have saved him—as they have his brother—from those almost insupportable bodily inconveniences he at this time endures. Then look at my own case. My wife entreated me to leave off hunting with my friend Raby's harriers, on two accounts: first, she feared I should break my neck, emphatically reminding me that the key of the cupboard was in my pocket; and, secondly, that, as a clergyman, it was improper in me to hunt or shoot. It was in vain that I referred her to the book of Genesis, to show that hunting was ordained by the Almighty Himself, and also pursued by the best of men. Then I must not shoot, for my neighbour, Lord Longden, did not like it, and it would prevent his giving me the living of Branton, which, you well know, he gave to a distant relation only last year, although I hung up my gun, and gave away my dogs seven years back. My case, therefore, is that—more from the fear of displeasing a great man, than offending my God—for I cannot look upon Him as so severe a judge—I have done myself all this disservice. I am punished in this world, from a vain apprehension of being punished in the next; I am become a cripple, by disease produced by an inactive life, and am, half my time, useless to my parishioners from that cause alone. It is now too late to remedy all this; but rather would I incline to the sentiment of Confucius, that he who finds out a new pleasure, provided it be harmless, is one of the most useful members of society, in a highly civilised country like our own.'

The ball commenced;—

> 'Music arose, with its voluptuous swell;
> Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spoke again';

and our hero was not long in selecting the partner of his choice. Like Merion, in the *Iliad*, also, he distinguished himself by his dancing, a qualification hardly to have been looked for in one who might have been disposed to have held that accomplishment cheap. But such was not the case. It was enough for him that it was an accomplishment, and one necessary for a gentleman; and although it could not have been said of him, what Shakespeare says of the dancing-master, that 'his grace was only in his heels,' he had taken some pains to improve himself in the elegant and fascinating art. But who was the object of his choice at this gay ball, where were assembled all the youth and beauty of the neighbourhood, that the higher class of society could boast of? Was it a young lady in her teens, about his own age, and one who, like himself, had just made her *début* in the world? It was not. He had selected a young and beautiful married woman for his partner, and who, although of character pure and spotless, seemed somewhat pleased by the choice. The dance concluded, he led her to her seat, and again made his election. But there was something in his manner, at this moment, that might not have been regarded by a common observer, but which attracted the eye of Lady Charlotte, and also of his *ci-devant* tutor, who happened to be seated by her side. There did not appear to be that gaiety in his demeanour, that earnest admiration of his partner, young and elegant as she was, that he had exhibited whilst standing opposite to Mrs. Denham—for that was the young matron's name; neither was he seen approaching her, as in the other case, for the purpose of exchanging words, or we might perhaps say, thoughts. All this, however, would have been passed over, but for some after-occurrences which had less chance of escaping the notice of his lynx-eyed observers—for such are all mothers, if not all tutors, over young persons of both sexes at a ball.

In the dance previous to entering the supper-room, our hero was again seen leading out Mrs. Denham, and afterwards appeared seated by her at the supper-table. Neither did his attentions stop here. When her carriage was ordered, it was he who handed her into it, and that of his own family being the next in the rank of those about to depart, he entered it with these words on his lips:—

'Well, Lady Charlotte (to his mother), I dare say you will be glad to get home, for you have had a fatiguing day of it. But, Emma (to his sister), was it not a delightful ball? Is not that Mrs. Denham a beautiful creature? I am so glad Sir John introduced me to her.'

'She is,' replied Lady Charlotte, 'and'—laying some emphasis on the first epithet—'as *good* as she is beautiful.'

'What a *spoon* you must be,' continued Frank, to his elder brother, 'to dance with those two ugly sisters, and that Miss Johnson, who is old enough to have been your mother, when there were so many pretty women in the room. For my own part, I think dancing, unless with a pretty woman for a partner, one of the greatest of all bores. In fact, pretty women and good suppers are, with me, the only inducement to go to balls.'

'Some of your Christchurch notions,' said Lady Charlotte, 'or else those of your friend Sir John. But I know no one fonder of a ball than he is, and you always see him dancing away as if——'

'Yes,' resumed our hero; 'but always with a pretty woman. I have heard him say, he dislikes an ugly woman in a ball-room as much as he would an ugly leader in his coach. He swears he never yet saw one who had any action that was not good looking, either in one place or in the other.'

'Ah,' resumed Lady Charlotte; 'Sir John's tongue runs fast, as, Dr. Johnson says, the race-horse does when he carries a light weight; but are you quite sure, Francis, he would not marry that little ugly heiress, whose fine estate joins his own?'

'No,' answered Frank, 'not if he was sure that, without her and her estate, he could never sit behind the bars, or his own coach, again.'

'There you go again, Frank,' observed Lady Charlotte laughingly, 'to the stable, as usual, for your allusions.'

'And did not you go thither, also my dear mother, for your simile—at all events, to the race-horse?' rejoined her son.

'I believe I did,' replied his mother; 'but I do not wonder at my having done so; for when you are at home, and especially when Sir John is at the Abbey, I hear of nothing else but horses, hounds, and coach-boxes, leaders, wheelers, and so forth. Still, I like Sir John, with all his foibles, but shall tell him, the next time I see him, not to be introducing you to pretty married women.'

Frank said nothing in answer to this remark, turning off the conversation to his sister, whom he asked, in a jocular mood, whether either of her partners had made a tender impression upon her heart, insinuating, at the same time, that that of their brother Andrew must necessarily have escaped unscathed in the assault, from the very ineffective strength of the batteries.

It has been often asserted that, amongst the infirmities of human nature, men take some pleasure in creating a feeling of jealousy towards a rival, in their wives, merely because it occasions the frequent mention of the name of the lady who may, to a certain extent, have supplanted them in their affections. One thing, however, is quite beyond doubt: namely, that men—young men especially—are perpetually given to introduce subjects that may lead to the mention of, or allusion to, the object of their attachment and love. And such was the case with Frank Raby. It would be useless to disguise the fact, that the personal charms of Mrs. Denham had made an impression on our hero; and the words 'Mrs. Denham said this,' and 'Mrs. Denham thought that,' were almost perpetually on his tongue, at least, as often as opportunity occurred to him. And what excuse can be made for his indulging himself in the anticipation of feasting on forbidden fruit? None, save the almost irresistible power of a beautiful woman on a heart so young as his; and the following is the description he gave of Mrs. Denham, to one of his Christchurch friends, on his return to Oxford, after the vacation:—

'She is,' said he, 'just what, to my eye, a beautiful woman should be. Her person is of an advantageous stature, very well proportioned, and not too tall. Her hair is black as jet, with more of nature than art in the arrangement of it; her eyes, neither quite black nor yet grey, contain more sweetness than fire. Her complexion inclines to the pale, though it does not want freshness. There is, in fact, a mixture of the lily with the rose, and a clearness and delicacy of skin which is essential to beauty in a woman. Her words and actions are full of grace, and there appears a sweetness of temper in her manner and demeanour, that must engage the affections of every one. Then there is a feature in her person which I greatly admire, and that is, the form of her hand and arm. By heavens, they might be copied for the portrait of the white-armed Juno; and her bust altogether would have done for a Phidias or a Praxiteles. And in her, even is an imperfection created a beauty. She has a slight hesitation in uttering her words, which, if she were my wife, I would not have removed on any account. And yet I can hardly describe to you the effect it has, but it is somewhat like this:—it gives a simplicity of expression, delightful in any one, but irresistibly so in a pretty woman; a sort of confiding manner about it, which, although it cannot be described, you could not but be sensible of; and to the expression of sentiments of endearment, what force must it give!'

'And what kind of a man is the husband of this fine woman?' asked Goodall, for it was to him that Frank Raby was unbosoming himself. 'I hope he is deserving of the treasure.'

'Not he, indeed,' replied our hero; 'he appears scarcely conscious of possessing such a jewel. If I had such a wife, I think I should never be able to keep my eyes off her person; whereas, although she was the finest and best-dressed woman at the ball at which I met her, I never once saw him even look upon her—certainly not in admiration. Then I am told he is equally indifferent at all times. She likes riding, and is a beautiful horse-woman, but a groom is her general attendant. She likes female society, but her husband does not, and few of her sex are asked to visit her. She is musical, but I am told he never quits the dining-room in time to hear a note of it.'

'*He is in danger*, I think,' observed Goodall, with a significant wink of the eye; 'and especially if you——'

'Nonsense,' observed Frank; 'a more virtuous woman never lived. I confess I was much stricken with her that night at the ball, and danced twice with her. Perhaps I may never see her again; and perhaps it will be well for me that I never do. In fact, when I handed her into her carriage, I seemed to wish to bid her a final adieu; and as it drove from the door, with her cold-hearted husband by her side, I muttered to myself these lines:—

"Since thou would'st needs, bewitched by some ill charms,
Be buried in these monumental arms;
All I can say is, may the earth lie light
Upon thy tender limbs: and so good-night."'

But to return to the party at the Abbey.

'I am somewhat uneasy,' said Lady Charlotte to Mr. Egerton, after a few days had expired since the night of the gay ball, 'about your friend Francis. I really think the silly boy fancies himself in love with that beautiful, and, I believe, very excellent person, Mrs. Denham. Emma tells me he is always talking about her, and he says he would have his right arm cut off, on condition that he could make her his wife. It is truly ridiculous: but he seems to verify the proverb of "love at first sight"—for, although he never saw Mrs. Denham before, he was evidently smitten, as the term is, by her charms. Fortunately Mr. Raby knows nothing of the matter, and God forbid he should; but as you are somewhat aware of it, as well as myself, I wish you would take an opportunity of giving him a lecture on the subject. He is too well-disposed, I am sure, to harbour dishonourable intentions towards any one; but the fact of his having the name of the lady so perpetually in his mouth is extremely unjust towards her, and the very thought of it makes me wretched. Oh,' continued Lady Charlotte, somewhat angrily, 'I will give Sir John a trimming if he introduces either of my sons again to a married woman, merely because she is pretty. There has been enough of mischief in my family, on that score, already, without Francis adding to the stock.'

'I am glad, my dear Lady Charlotte,' said Mr. Egerton, 'that you have mentioned this subject to me, which, I doubt not, is a painful one to you, as, indeed, it is to myself. I have a strong regard for Francis, and should extremely lament that one of the first acts of his manhood should cast a slur over his character, which it might never be in his power to remove. That he has acted imprudently, at all events *thoughtlessly*, in this affair, there is his own evidence to show. In one of those freaks in which human nature sometimes indulges, he has inconsiderately yielded to the impression made upon him by a few hours' intercourse with, certainly, a very lovely woman, but one whose situation in life forbids her ever becoming his wife, unless under circumstances which no rational man would anticipate, much less speculate upon—the age of her husband being not more than half a dozen years beyond his own.'

'Then you really think the silly boy fancies himself all at once enamoured with another man's wife?' interrupted Lady Charlotte, with marked anxiety in her countenance.

'Why,' replied Mr. Egerton, 'if it were justifiable to make a joke of a subject so serious as this, it might create a smile were I to tell you in what way my suspicions have been confirmed. Whilst Francis was under my tuition, his constant objection to verse-making was, that he had no poetry in his soul; in fact, that Nature had forbidden his being a poet, and, consequently, his attempt at making verses was a futile one. But mark the change! No sooner does the "silly boy," as your ladyship so properly styles him, fancy himself in love, than he likewise fancies himself a poet.'

'Surely,' exclaimed Lady Charlotte, 'he has not been writing verses to Mrs. Denham?'

'I hope not,' replied Mr. Egerton; 'but that he has been exercising his newly-acquired talent *on* Mrs. Denham, I fear there is no reason to doubt; and I speak from somewhat like ocular demonstration of the fact. Happening to enter his room yesterday afternoon, in search of a book I had lent him, I saw some scraps of paper on his table, on which, in spite of erasures and alterations, I could decipher the following lines (the fair copies, I presume, he may have put into his pocket, intending, as may be also presumed, to throw the rough ones into the fire). The first ran thus:—

"Sweet's the light of morning breaking
  O'er the dew-bespangled mead;
Sweet the night-breeze, hardly shaking
  In its course the pliant reed.
Sweeter far the smile enlightening
  Beauty's soft and sparkling cheek;
And the sigh love's ardour heightening,
  With its breast so soft and meek."

'Then scrap the second contained these:—

"Thou hast an eye of tender blue,
And thou hast locks of sable hue,
And cheeks that shame the morning's break,
And lips that might, for redness, make
    Roses seem pale beside them:
But whether soft or sweet are they,
Lady, alas! I cannot say,
    For *I* have never tried them.

"Yet thus created for delight,
Lady! thou art not——"

'He proceeds no further; vulgarly speaking, there is a hole in the ballad. But, turning over the paper, I found that his muse had been again at work, and had again failed. Even love, I fear, will not make Francis a poet. He had scribbled thus:—

"The music ceased, the last gay dance was o'er,
  And one by one the brilliant beauties fled;
The garlands vanished from the frescoed floor,
  The nodding fiddler hung his weary head;

"And I, a melancholy single man,
Retired to mourn my solitary fate;
I slept awhile, but o'er my slumbering ran
The sylph-like image of my darling mate.

"I dreamt of mutual love, and Hymen's joys,
Of happy moments and connubial blisses;
And then I thought of little girls and boys,
The mother's glances, and the infant's kisses.

"But when I woke, how changed appear'd the scene;
I found——"

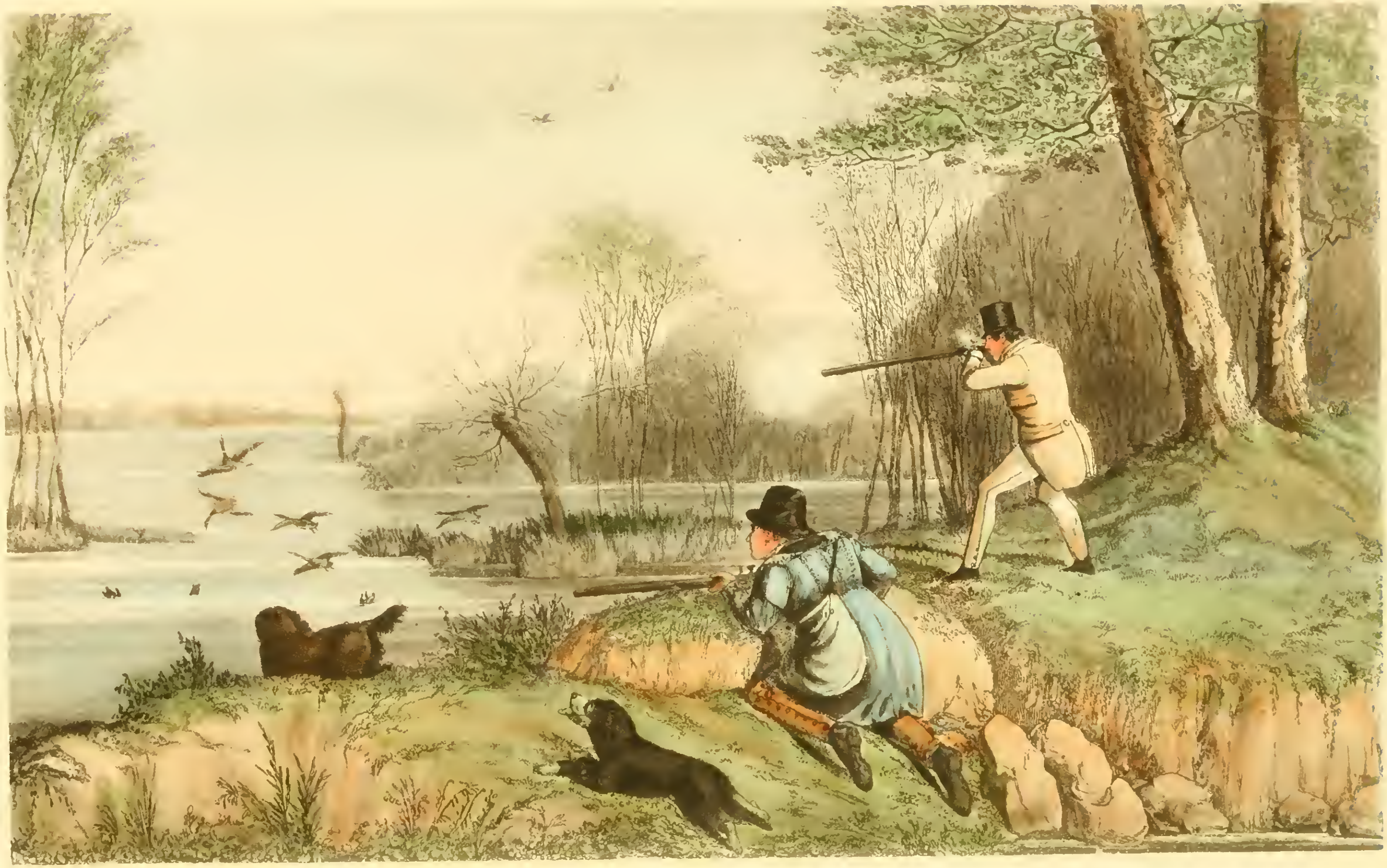
'Here he stopped, with the words—"Query, look out *mate* in Johnson; fear it won't do for partner at a ball. Implies partner for life, and that can't be. The devil take——"'

'Well, really, Mr. Egerton,' said Lady Charlotte, 'this farrago of nonsense is almost laughable. However, although, no doubt, another term at Christchurch will cure him of his "love at first sight," still, I wish you would talk seriously to him on the subject, and warn him of the consequences of indulging a guilty passion.'

'That I will certainly do,' replied Mr. Egerton, 'at the first convenient opportunity; and also tell him not to indulge in the sudden inspiration of his muse, unless he can turn it to a better account. I think, however, I know your son well enough to persuade myself that the present outbreak is but the mere ebullition of youthful blood, and that a little cool reflection will restore him to his senses. First, his heart ran away with his tongue; and then, his tongue ran away with his heart.'

Not many hours elapsed before the wished-for opportunity arrived, during a stroll through the shrubberies, for Mr. Egerton to fulfil the promise he had made to Lady Charlotte; which he did with both grace and feeling: pointing out to Frank the folly, to say the least of it, of this newly-born fancy, and requiring from him a pledge that he would think no more of Mrs. Denham, further than as a common acquaintance of the day; nor continue to mention her name so lightly as he had lately done. This pledge Frank willingly gave, and a circumstance shortly afterwards occurred to put the seal upon the same. Mr. Denham's father died, in consequence of which he removed his family to a distant part of England, and our hero and the beautiful Mrs. Denham never met again.

There is little more to record of the proceedings of the long



Frank Raby "flapper-shooting"
on the great lake in the Park.

on the lonely edge of the Lake

[illegible]

vacation, fishing and shooting being the principal amusements of that period—at all events, with young men who, like Frank Raby, come under the denomination of sportsmen. Relating to the last-named diversion, one fact is worth mentioning:—What is called flapper-shooting was amongst the sports entered into with spirit by our hero, and, what is very rarely the case, it was not, in this instance, merely confined to young wild ducks. The great lake in the park, at Amstead, was also frequented by teals, which bred in one of its islands in the summer, a fact very much doubted by naturalists, and certainly of rare occurrence in the southern parts of England. With a brace of well-broken retrievers, flapper-shooting, whether at ducks or teal, is very good sport, and rendered valuable by its being seasonable previously to the commencement of game-shooting, to which it of course gives place.

At partridge-shooting, Frank Raby was now become an adept. In fact, there was but little difference, in the contribution to the bag, between himself and the elder Perren; and as for Jem, he bowed to the superiority of his young master, who, he was heard to say, 'he believed would turn out a capital sportsman, in spite of all that had been done to spoil him, by sending him to Eton and Oxford.' And our hero, with a gun in his hand, was a sportsman in the strict sense of that word, and not merely what, in these times, is more reckoned upon, namely, 'a *dead shot.*' 'The latter,' as Mr. Cobbett eloquently expressed himself, in allusion to the admirers of the modern *battue* system, 'never participates in that great delight which all sensible men enjoy at beholding the beautiful action, the docility, the zeal, the wonderful sagacity of the pointer and the setter'; but *their* merit consists in rarely missing a pheasant which is found for them by men-beaters, and in slaughtering as many head of game in a day, as a sportsman, who takes pleasure in finding them, would be satisfied with in a week. Pheasants, however, were not, at this period, plentiful on the Amstead estate, but their rarity increased their value. There were, in those days, no 'sky-rockets of pheasants,' as in the technical language of these, when a cloud of them rises in a corner of a cover into which they have been driven, and three or four fall at a shot.

We will now exhibit our hero at the county races, it being his first appearance on a race-course since he had visited

Ascot during his sojourn with his uncle in London, the account of which we have detailed. It appeared that he had brought along with him, from that aristocratic meeting, a few aristocratic ideas, and, amongst them, the notion that it was considered very slow indeed to be a looker-on at any species of diversion without having an interest in it; and in this case, having no *bonâ fide* interest in the horses—none appearing in his name—he could only concern himself with their performances. His betting-book, then, was produced, and a few speculations entered in it, though altogether to a trifling amount. This act of our hero, however, gave birth to a ludicrous incident or two, which, as a caution to youngsters who venture on the same slippery ground, it may not be amiss to make mention of.

'Pray, Francis,' said Lady Charlotte to her son, on observing him, from the window of her coach, familiarly addressed, on the second day of the meeting, by a person of doubtful appearance—that is to say, a very ordinary-looking man, in tolerably good clothes—'who is the friend who came up to you just now, and seemed so glad to see you?'

'Oh,' replied our hero, who did not intend to let his mother into the secret, 'he only wanted to speak to me about one of the horses.'

'And that strange-looking old man, on a white horse, in a harness-bridle, who followed you a long way down the course, apparently in earnest conversation with you, and carrying a book in his hand?' continued Lady Charlotte.

Here was a poser for the young sportsman. He was above telling an untruth, but was somewhat puzzled for an off-hand answer to rather a close question.

'A bothering old Irishman, by the name of O'Hara,' replied Frank, 'who has been trying to persuade me, that *he* could pick out the winner of the next race, and wanted to know whether *I* thought *I* could do so, also.'

'But, Francis,' exclaimed his sister, 'I saw you all but quarrelling with some ill-looking man on the other side of the course; what could that have been about?'

'Why, I had better tell you the real state of the case at once,' replied Francis. 'The persons you allude to are all of them members of the most rascally community upon earth—known by the appellation of black-legs. They attend all country races; and, having heard me offer a few bets yesterday, have been following me about the course to-day, with the hope of winning my money. But I shall be very cautious in having anything to say to them, for two reasons. In the first place, my knowledge of the horses must be very inferior to that of themselves, who are intimate with all the trainers and jockeys in the county; and in the next, many of them dispute a bet if they lose it. For example, the man Emma saw me disputing with served me thus:—having won ten pounds from him yesterday, I went up to him to-day, and said, very civilly, "I will thank you for ten pounds"; on which he replied, "I beg pardon, sir, *I have ten pounds to receive from you.*"'

'And did you pay the fellow?' said Lady Charlotte.

'I did not,' replied Frank, 'but I lost the ten pounds I won from him. Then that old Irishman is, I understand, famous for making wrangles, and disputing bets which he loses. But the greatest adept of them all, is the well-dressed rascal you first saw me speaking to. He has a method of half-shutting one eye, so as to give the appearance of being blind of it. This device serves him in two ways. When he makes a bet with a stranger, he appears blind of an eye, previous to the event being decided; if the bet is lost, he shows two good eyes, and the stranger being in pursuit of a one-eyed man to pay him his money, overlooks him in the crowd, and, of course, never gets paid. Then, again, I heard of his doing a very neat thing, the other day, by the help of this accommodating eye. He lost twenty pounds to a stranger, on a race, having his eye closed when he made the bet. On the result being against him, he thus addressed his antagonist, with his eye wide open: "I believe, sir, I owe you twenty pounds." "You mistake, sir," replied the other, "I had only one bet on the race, *and that was with a one-eyed gentleman.*"'

'Well, really, Francis,' observed Lady Charlotte, 'I think you must be a very great simpleton to have anything to do with such scoundrels; in fact, it is only with simpletons that they dare to play such tricks. As you cannot be a match for them, I hope you will, from this time forth, have nothing more to do with them.'

Our hero made no reply, and so the matter dropped.

The other incident which occurred is of a more harmless nature. In the days to which I am now alluding, it was the custom for the public dinners, or 'ordinaries,' as they are termed, at race meetings, to be attended by the gentlemen of rank and wealth in the neighbourhood, as well as, occasionally, by a few whose situation in life, although respectable, did not allow of their being in such good company on any other occasion. Amongst the latter class was a wealthy young yeoman, fond of racing and hunting almost to insanity, but who, from his appearance and manners, would, in these days, be placed at the head of all the *snobs*. There was, also, in the room, a gentleman in whom he greatly delighted, inasmuch as he was an owner of harriers and race-horses, and, by his extreme good-nature and affability, a highly popular character with the order of which his admirer made one. It chanced that they sat opposite to each other at the dinner-table; and as the youthful blood of the yeoman waxed warm with wine, he resolved to pay his favourite Squire a compliment, and, taking courage, thus addressed the chair:—

'*Mr. President*, may I be allowed to propose a toast?'

'By all means,' replied the president.

'Then I will give you—*Down-Barton's glory*,' said the man, who delighted in hounds and horses, and doated on the Squire that was the owner of them.

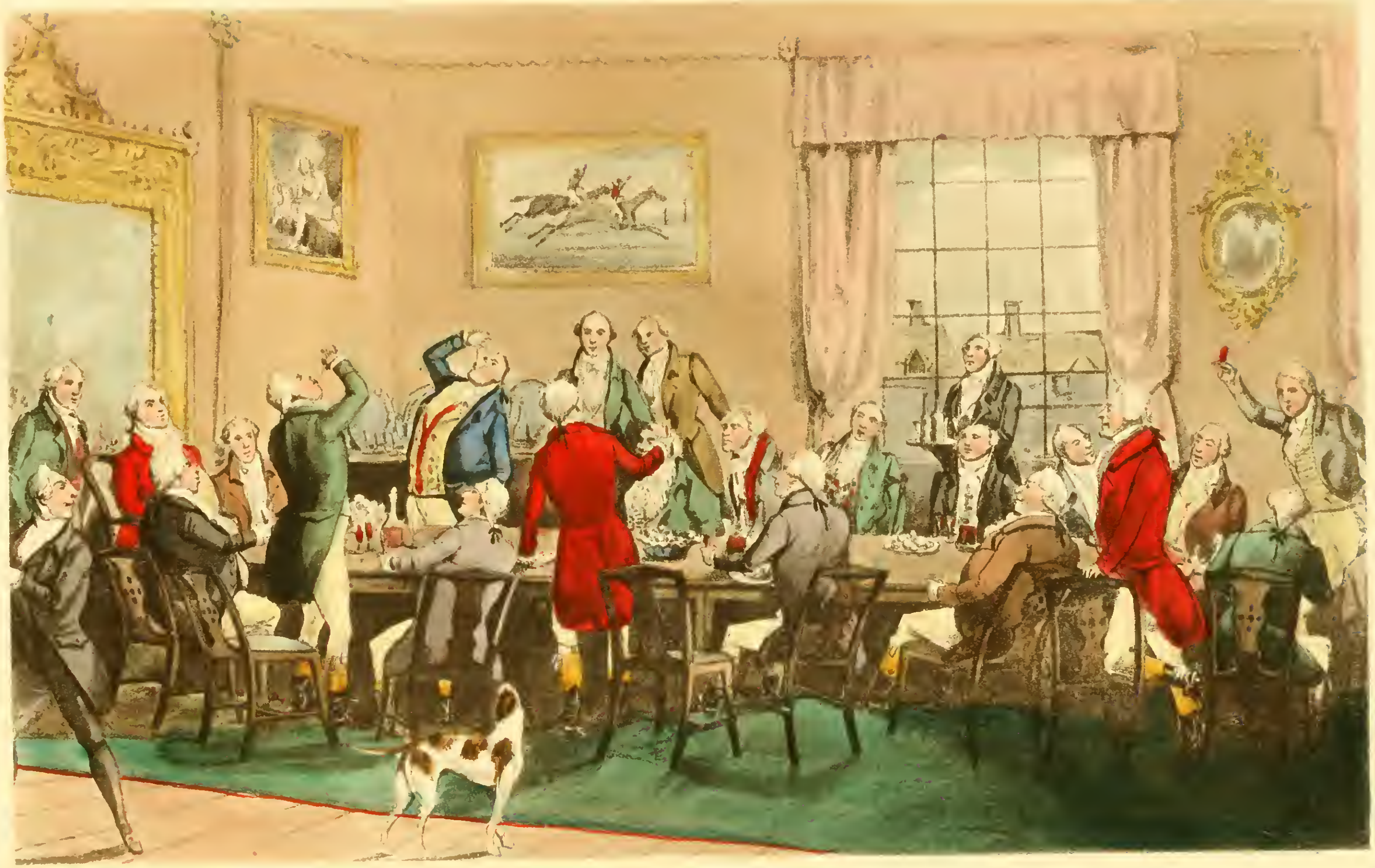
'Down-Barton's glory?' repeated the steward; 'I must beg an explanation of the toast, for I do not comprehend its meaning.'

'Then, sir, you shall have it,' resumed the yeoman; '*I mean Squire Cranbrook, and there he sits*'—(pointing to his opposite neighbour).

It was now the Squire's turn to pay a compliment, his health having been drunk with great applause: and this is the way in which he did it. Sending for his servant, he ordered him to go to a druggist's shop, and get half a pint of syrup of buckthorn, which he was to put into a bottle containing an equal quantity of claret, and, when well mixed, to put it by him on the table. 'Now, Mr. President,' said Squire Cranbrook, 'allow *me* to give a toast.'

'By all means,' answered the steward; 'always happy to hear from Mr. Cranbrook.'

'Then I'll give you the health of my opposite neighbour, Mr. Ridgeways, a good sportsman, and a dear lover of horses and hounds,' replied Squire Cranbrook. 'Stand up, if you



"*Mr. Ridgeways' good health*—now!"

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please, Mr. Ridgeways (himself also rising from his seat at the moment, with a bumper of claret in one hand, and the delightful mixture in the other). 'Now, sir,' said he to his admirer, 'to convince you of the high sense I entertain of the compliment you have paid me, in proposing my health in the flattering manner in which you have done it, we will, if you please, pledge to each other in a bumper, out of the same bottle.'

'I should be delighted, sir,' hiccuped the yeoman — the Squire filling his (Mr. Ridgeways') glass at the moment. 'And now, sir,' continued the Squire, 'as a still further proof of sincerity, and my high esteem for you as a sportsman and gentleman, suppose we take off our glasses *at a chuck*, and I'll give the word.'

'Delighted beyond measure,' replied the head of all the snobs.

'Gentlemen!' exclaimed the Squire, 'here's the health of Mr. Ridgeways, a great promoter of sport.—Mr. Ridgeways' good health—*now*,' and at the word 'now,' the contents of both glasses disappeared.

The sequel of the story is soon told. The operation of the buckthorn was instantaneous; and the warm-hearted yeoman was carried out of the room in a state that need not, if it could, be described.

CHAPTER IX

Two events occur, of great influence upon the career of the hero: he takes his degree at Oxford, and loses his brother, whereby he becomes heir to the goodly domains of Amstead.

We now proceed to rather an awful period in the lives of young English gentlemen, and of such, especially, as may wish to distinguish themselves as scholars — namely, the taking a degree at college. At the period, however, to which we are now alluding, between thirty and forty years back, this was a less serious affair than it now is, inasmuch as the undergraduates and examining masters—of Oxford, in particular—were more intimately associated with college convivialities than they now are; so much so, indeed, that not only, in many cases, were the selection of the master to examine them, and the books in which they were to be examined, left to the candidate's choice, but, on the preceding evening, at what is now called, amongst the vulgar, 'a good blow out,' at the said candidate's expense, the very passages in the chosen authors were pointed out as having been carefully perused for the occasion.

The sequel to this part of the progress of my hero and his brother is soon told. Andrew took a first-class degree, and was highly complimented in the schools; and Frank obtained one quite above the average of those taken, or even tried for, by young gentlemen brought up as he had been brought up, amongst hounds, horses, gamekeepers, and coachmen, and whose mind was strongly bent towards all uses to which such animals are applied.

Having completed their Oxford 'trials,' everything was arranged for the departure of the two Rabys on their travels, when an unexpected event put a stop to it. The insidious disease which had long been making silent, though certain, inroads on the naturally weakly constitution of the elder brother, now showed itself openly; and it was the opinion of his medical attendants that a continental tour was out of the question, whatever might be the result of the benign influence of a more temperate climate than the one in which he was then living. This step was in contemplation, but met with the same fate, in being also deemed impracticable, and was, of course, at once abandoned. In short, the rupture of a blood-vessel at the lungs, produced by a fit of coughing, brought on a rapid exhaustion of a body already enfeebled by disease and weakly from its birth; and in less than a month from the day on which that occurrence took place, this talented and amiable, although somewhat eccentric young man, was laid by the side of his ancestors in the family vault of Amstead church.

It is almost needless to remind the reader of the change that had now taken place in the situation and prospects of our hero. In the place of his being sure of succeeding to nothing at the decease of his father, beyond his share of the money settled on younger children on his marriage, which, as there were only two, amounted to £15,000, he now found himself heir apparent to the entire Amstead estate, settled by entail on male heirs; and likewise heir presumptive—at least, such had he a right to consider himself—to the very considerable wealth of his uncle. The effect of this change very soon became visible; two more hunters were talked of, as necessary to hunt with the foxhounds, the Amstead harriers and 'old Dick' being considered as *infra dig.*, if not absolute bores. Perren also was spoken to, by the 'young Squire,' in a tone somewhat different from what he had been previously accustomed to from the late 'young Squire,' or even from our hero himself. 'I *will* have lots of pheasants in the "Big Wood,"' said he to him one day; 'and likewise in "Blackthorn Rough"; they will make capital preserves.'

'That they sartinly will, Mr. Francis,' replied Perren; 'but where am I to get the pheasants to stock them with? I doubt the Squire will not stand the expense.'

'D—n the expense!' said Francis; 'I will find the pheasants. I can have as many as I like from a man in London; and if the Squire will not pay for them, I will.'

'But the lookers-out, Mr. Francis,' resumed the keeper; 'who is to pay them? Old Will Hodges and Jack Barret will have no chance against the poachers, when our covers are full of pheasants.'

'I will find lookers-out,' answered our hero, 'and some of the right sort, too. You must draft those two old cripples, who are quite unequal to their task, and have long been so.'

'Well, to be sure,' said Perren, 'they are poor creatures for that purpose, sir, but you know——'

'Yes, yes,' exclaimed Francis, 'I know what you are going to say; they are worn out in our service; but I shall not forget that circumstance; and I will take care to provide for them, although I believe they have ginned many a hare in their time, and spent the money they sold them for in the alehouse.'

'Well, to be sure,' continued Perren, 'they both loves a drop of drink, as most people who follows field sports commonly do; but I never catched them out in selling any game.'

'I dare say not,' answered Frank; 'they are both too sly for that.'

Then, again, a conversation took place, in the stable, between the young Squire and the coachman, somewhat to this effect:—

'I must make my father get rid of these infernal long-tailed blacks,' said the former; 'they are really only fit for a London black job.'

'You are quite right, sir,' observed the latter; 'I am really quite ashamed of them when we go to the races, or to dine at Sir John's, or Lord Morton's. In short, the sarvants make game of me, and tell me I want nothing but the cold-meat cart behind me; and one of them—a London sarvant, who was at the Grange on a visit—axed me if I warn't agoing to be coachman to King Pluto? But I tell you, Mr. Francis, it's no use speaking to the Squire about these here old blacks; it's my lady that will do the business. I often hear my lady praising other gentlefolk's coach-horses; and I once heard her say she "wished Mr. Raby would get a better sort in his stable." Now you know, sir, the Squire never refuses my lady anything; see what expense he goes to with those tame pheasants, and that trumpery flower-garden; I am sure, sir, one word from my lady would do it.'

'Oh, I'll do it,' said Frank: 'I am determined these stinking, greasy-heeled brutes shall be drafted, and that infernal old coach, too; for you might as well attempt to drive four horses from a stool, as from that thing called a box.'

Then the old and faithful butler was talked to, much after this fashion, the first time our hero caught him alone in his pantry:—

'Is your stock of claret low?' demanded Frank.

'Not particularly so," replied the butler.

'The Squire has got very shy of it, then,' resumed Frank; 'I was quite annoyed on Monday, when Sir John Inkleton and those gentlemen dined here; he never called for it until he had half poisoned them with his "old port," as he calls it, only fit for the steward's room.'

'It is very dear, you know, Mr. Francis; at least, such as is drunk in this house; Carbonnell's best. Let me see, nearly £100 the hogshead, or twelve shillings the bottle; a deal of money, sir, to be swallowed at four glasses! it's like swallowing gold, Mr. Francis.'

'Nonsense,' said Francis; 'what if it is?—there is plenty here to pay for it. And the champagne; how is it we did not have champagne on Monday?' 'Lord! sir,' replied the butler, 'you would not drink champagne in such cold weather as this; it's only fit for the dog-days, when you want something to cool you.' 'Well,' said our hero, 'these things must be altered, or few of my friends will come a second time to the Abbey.'

Next comes Mrs. Jones, the old housekeeper.

'Upon my word, Mother Jones,' said the young Squire to her, as she was giving out some essentials to the cook, 'you are getting very slack, indeed; and as for you,' addressing himself to the cook, 'it is time to put you on the shelf,—not that you must want for anything for the rest of your life, for you have been an excellent servant. But, Mother Jones, you are really past enduring. Your bills of fare are of the most scanty dimensions, and as for your second courses, you really give us nothing.'

'Lord, sir,' replied Mrs. Jones, 'what can I give you, at this time of the year, better than you always have?—either hare, woodcock, or snipes, as the keeper brings them in, for you know we have no pheasants here, at least very few.'

'We will soon have plenty,' said Frank; 'but mind this,—I have two friends coming to visit me next week, and as the fathers of each keep excellent tables—indeed, one of them gives £200 a year to his French cook—I do hope you and the cook will exert yourselves, and not let them go home saying they were half-starved at Amstead.'

'No one was ever starved here yet,' muttered the cook, as she walked out of the room, not a little nettled at the remark; adding, when she thought she was out of hearing,—'*This comes of your Christchurch job*; but it does not signify talking, the times get worse and worse. Gentlemen isn't now what they had used to be, contented with a good wholesome dinner; a plague on those French cooks, say I; they have brought many a good gentleman to the dogs. I know one of them who——'

Here her voice was drowned by persons meeting her in the passage which led to her scene of action — the well-stored kitchen—our hero joining with Mrs. Jones in a hearty laugh at the zeal displayed by the faithful old cook for the credit of the Amstead kitchen.

Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof: here the conversation with this class of domestics ceased; but on the following morning it was somewhat alarmingly resumed amongst those of another description.

'I want to see Mr. Robson,' said our hero, and Mr. Robson (the steward) made his appearance.

'Robson,' said Frank Raby, 'I want to find out a part of the park where the ground is very dry and sound, and quite out of sight of the house; also within easy reach of water.'

'May I ask you, sir,' replied Mr. Robson, 'for what purpose you intend to apply such land? If for planting——'

'It is not for planting at all,' interrupted the young Squire (for '*being planted*,' perhaps, would have been no misnomer). 'I have some idea of getting two or three thorough-bred brood mares, in which case half a dozen paddocks will be necessary. The spot should be high and dry, and in as retired a part as can be found, that the mares may not be disturbed.'

'Have you consulted the Squire, sir, may I be so bold to ask?' observed the steward.

'Not yet,' answered Frank; 'but leave that to me. Let us walk into the park, and look for the place I want.'

As they were proceeding on their errand, through the fine and well-timbered park, Perren, the keeper, appeared in sight. 'Give him a holloa, Robson,' said our hero; and in five minutes Perren was at his young master's side.

'Perren,' said he, 'I want to have a word or two with you, as I am about to leave home. You must get rid of all those slow, lumbering pointers of yours, and, before next August, be provided with two brace of down-charge setters, and a brace of Newfoundland retrievers, for I shall be in Scotland for the grousing season.'

'In Scotland, sir!' exclaimed the keeper.

'Yes,' answered his young master,—strangely altered, by the bye, in the old keeper's eyes since that time last year. 'Sir John, and myself, and young Lord Dauntley, have taken a shooting-ground of one of the great Scotch dukes, for which we are to pay £400.'

'But the setters, sir,' resumed the keeper; 'right good ones are very difficult to get. And then the money to get 'em with.'

'Oh! leave that to me,' continued Frank.

'But the "*down-charge*," sir. I reckon we shall make a bad job of that, sir: I never zead a down-charge dog in my life, though I have heared Sir John's keeper speaking of them.'

'Oh! leave that to me,' was once more the clincher. 'I shall send them into Cheshire, to old Potts, the watchmaker, who breaks them for ten pounds apiece.'

'Ten pounds for breaking a dog!' exclaimed the keeper, with his eyebrows half-way up his forehead, and his little pig eyes opening as wide as he could stretch them. 'Did you ever hear of such a thing, Mr. Robson?—the man must be a big rogue.'

'Not at all,' resumed Frank; 'it is money well laid out. Lord Dauntley tells me he can bring four setters, broke by him, into the field, not one of which will stir, after the bird is down, till called by its name. For example—if Dash makes the point, Dash is first on his legs again, not one of the others stirring until their names are called. See what an advantage this gives you with wounded or scattered birds! He refused a hundred guineas for the two brace of dogs.'

'Well, to be sure,' observed Perren, 'his lordship has a chance to get his money back, but——'

'Oh! botheration to getting the money back, you slow old fool,' said our hero. 'Do you look out for two brace of the best young setters you can find, and leave the rest to me.'

'But the retrievers, sir,' resumed the keeper; 'where shall I——'

'Oh! leave them to me,' was the young Squire's reply. 'Lord Dauntley has recommended me to a dog-dealer in London, who will furnish them to me, but I suppose I shall have to pay the rascal an infernal price for good ones.'

'No doubt, sir,' observed the keeper; 'and wouldn't it be well, sir, first of all, to know that they be good ones; for, if they shouldn't be good, I doubt you would have some trouble to get your money back?'

'Well, leave that to me,' said Frank; 'look you to the setters; and now go about your business; but don't come home without at least three couple of cocks, as I want to send two couple to London.'

The keeper touched his hat, and walked off; and, just as he was beginning to cogitate, was holloaed back by his young master, who thus somewhat imperiously addressed him:—

'Oh! Perren, I forgot to mention one thing to you. I don't think I shall ever be really fond of coursing. In the first place, it is too slow a sport for me; and, in the next, I think it breeds petty jealousies amongst the owners of dogs. In fact, I am now about to give a proof of the latter objection. I am *determined* that leather-headed parson, Roberts, shall no longer be the champion of our coursing meeting. He has now won the cup three years following, but he must have a check. Those brindled devils of his will not be hard to beat: therefore, you must look out for some of the best blood that can be found.'

'And where will I get it, sir?' demanded the keeper; 'I knows nobody that has——'

'Stop; never mind the greyhounds, you may leave them to me, and go on for the present with your own mongrels, who, I must acknowledge, seldom miss a hare, although they all run foul,' continued our hero: 'Lord Dauntley will be the man to apply to, as he is a member of the Swiffham meeting. Only mind this, I am determined to beat that old parson, cost what it may.'

Exit Mr. Perren, heaving a deep sigh, and muttering to himself—'I wish all this may end well.'

I have yet one more little 'sign of the times' to produce. The following day was a hunting day with Mr. Raby, and his harriers went to one of his best places for sport. One of Frank's horses went with them, but he himself did not make his appearance at the breakfast table. His father ordered him to be summoned, and his answer was this:—

'Tell my father I have ordered Achilles to be sent to cover with the hounds, but, as I have got a bit of a headache, I shall not get up just yet. Tell him not to wait for me; I will follow him.'

The hour of meeting being ten, the harriers had one good run before our hero made his appearance, which was at the comfortable, and, with harriers, now usual hour of twelve. And when he did arrive, there was a something in his manner that did not exactly please old Dick.

'Where is Inkleton?' said he to his father, scarcely throwing his eye over the pack. At all events it was not—as formerly—'Here's a fine morning, Dick, for a run! Yoicks! Bellman and Blossom, you beauties, I hope you'll show us a tickler to-day.'—No; it was once more—'Where the devil is Inkleton?—he promised to be here—but to be sure it's early yet—to arrange about our horses sleeping out to-night; and also about ourselves getting to the foxhounds to-morrow. It is one of their most distant covers, thirty miles off at least, but I would not miss it on any consideration. Confound him, I wish he would come, for my groom is waiting at the Abbey for orders to send the General forward.' Inkleton at length arrived; and the arrangements to go to cover were instantly made, after this rather comfortable fashion—namely, Frank to dine with his friend that evening; to go the first twelve miles of the thirty next morning, on his friend's coach-box, behind four of his greys; and to put four posters to the 'drag,' over the last eighteen. And we may as well give the events of the day at once; at least those in which we are concerned. They found a capital fox; and on seeing a person play a solo over a new, stiff, hog-backed, oaken stile, at the end of fifteen miles, point blank, and over a right stiff country to boot, our hero made him an offer of 200 guineas for his horse, which, after some hesitation, was accepted, Sir John having been previously consulted as to whence the 200 were to be forthcoming, a point soon determined upon, Sir John making use of an expression rather familiar to our hero—

namely, ‘Leave that to me.’ In fact, Sir John said, ‘Let the horse be sent to my house to-morrow, and I will advance the money, and with pleasure, for I think you have bought a right good horse.’

But we must ‘Hark back’ to the harriers. They also found a capital hare, and a capital run was the result. Our hero not only took the lead, but frequently pressed upon the hounds; now and then, indeed, riding abreast of the leading ones, regardless of old Dick's—

‘Pray don't press upon 'em, Mr. Raby’—(it was no longer ‘Mr. Francis’): on the contrary, he had once the satisfaction of hearing him exclaim—

‘Go along, you yelping curs; get from under my horse's feet, or I'll ride over you!’

But the scent was so good, and the hounds were so good, that they would not be driven off the line; and a capital forty minutes to Lord Morton's plantation was the result, no one being near to them except Frank Raby and old Dick, Sir John being upon a hack. But I have not done with them yet. Seeing Mr. Raby, as he called him, putting his horse straight at a six-barred white gate, into his lordship's plantation, which he knew was always locked, the following soliloquy escaped him:—

‘Surely Mr. Raby ain't agoing to jump that gate! He's over it, by the Lord! Well, now I am done; I never thought I should have seen the man who could set me with these hounds; but I am too old, and so is Clodhopper, for white plantation gates. Well, I never thought I should have come to this.’

One of the park keepers being at hand, the gate was opened, and the first thing that presented itself to Dick, was our hero, who had jumped some very high paling, out of the plantation, into the park, standing on his feet in the middle of the pack, the hare lying dead in their presence.

‘Well, Mr. Raby,’ exclaimed Dick, on approaching his young master, and within hearing—with a sort of grin on his countenance, which I believe is called ‘laughing on the wrong side of the mouth’—‘I think, sir, you needn't go to the foxhounds, when you can see such a run as this with our hounds. And what a horse, to be sure, is that there Ackillis!’

‘He's only half a good one,’ said Frank.

'Make so bold, Mr. Raby,' observed Dick, 'what do you call a *whole* good one?'

'He wants a turn of speed, Dick, as your old Clodhopper wants a turn of blood. You see *he* could not do it at the last, or you would have been here to save me the trouble of keeping your hounds at bay.'

This speech was 'daggers to the soul' of poor Dick, and all vestige of the 'grin' disappeared. In fact, so dejected was he, in the servants' hall, throughout the evening—so unusual with him when his hounds had been showing sport—that he was more than once asked if he were not ill?

'There is nothing the matter with me,' was his reply; but on waking from a bit of a snooze in his chair, after two extra horns of ale, he was heard to sing out—

'Damn that white plantation gate!'

It might, for a moment, be a matter of surprise in what way the various discussions which have been detailed, relating to the schemes and speculations of the young Squire, reached the ears of his parents; but when it is recollected that five servants on the establishment were involved in them, the thing is easily accounted for.

To begin. 'La, Miss Raby,' said her maid, when attending her in her bedroom, the next night, 'what do you think?—we shall be so gay at Amstead; Mr. Francis is going to keep *race-horses*! Oh, how I do love a race! Then,' continued the Abigail, 'he is going to have the finest greyhounds in the world, and we are all to go to the coursing meeting, to see him win the cup. But I haven't told you all yet, miss. The coachman said last night, in the hall (as the servants' hall is called), that you was no longer to be drawn about by those old black horses, with long tails, only fit for a funeral; and that Mr. Francis was going to London to buy four blood bays, as the coachman, I think, called them.'

'I don't believe it, Sophy,' said Miss Raby.

'It's true, upon my honour, ma'am,' resumed the Abigail; 'and not only that, but you are to have a new coach as well, to be built under Mr. Francis's direction. And I suppose you have heard of his new horse?'

'Not I, indeed,' was the reply.

'La, miss; why he bought him out a hunting with the fox-hounds, the day before yesterday, for 300 guineas, and I heard

Jack Wilson ordered by his groom to go to Sir John Inkleton's to fetch him home to-morrow.'

'I never heard a word of it,' said the young lady.

'Nor of the house in Scotland neither, miss?'

'Not a word.'

'Oh! he has taken such a fine house; that is, it is between him, Sir John, and Lord Dauntley, I think they call him; and they are to give £1000 a year for it, to shoot grouse and stags upon, and some other things, whose names I can't remember.'

'You astonish me, Sophy,' said Miss Raby.

'All as true as the Bible, miss, I assure you,' resumed the Abigail; 'all the servants in the hall know it, and——'

'But, Sophy, surely Francis must be mad,' said the sister; 'whence is the money to come, to do all this?'

'Oh, miss,' replied Sophy, 'that is all right. The coachman says, he will be bound Mr. Beaumont has given him £10,000. You know, Miss Raby, he is very rich, and how fond he is of Mr. Francis.'

'I know my uncle is fond of him,' replied Miss Raby, 'and that he is rich; but he is not so fond of parting with his money, Sophy, as all that comes to. And, pray, have you heard anything else of my brother? You really alarm me, Sophy!'

'Nothing particular, ma'am,' answered Sophy; 'only they were saying last night, in the hall, that Mr. Francis was going to make strange alterations about the game; that he was very cross with old Perren, the keeper, about his dogs, because they would not *charge*; that he gave Jem Perren half a guinea for licking young Mr. Hall, of the Ashes, because he called him proud—Mr. Francis, I mean, ma'am; and I heard old Dick the huntsman say he thought Mr. Francis wasn't easy in his mind about that lady he used to talk so much about; for, the last time he was out with our hounds, he tried to break his neck over a new white-painted gate in Lord Morton's park.'

It is scarcely necessary to say that every word of this was carefully retailed the next morning to Lady Charlotte, by her daughter, before her ladyship broke her fast; and by her transferred to Mr. Raby, before he ate his dinner. Now then for the result.

It so happened that, on this evening, there was no male stranger guest at the Abbey: and after the ladies left the dinner-room, Mr. Raby and his only son were left by themselves, over a bottle of Griffiths's port.

'Well, Frank,' said Mr. Raby, 'although by Dick's account you have got too fast for my harriers, I find you met with your match yesterday with the foxhounds, for I hear the horses were all very much beat.'

'They were, indeed,' replied Frank: 'in short, only one horse had wind left in him to leap a very high stile at the finish, and I bought him.'

'You did right, Frank,' said the father; 'that is to say, if you bought him at a reasonable price.'

'Two hundred was the price,' said our hero.

'A large sum, to be sure,' observed Mr. Raby, 'but I suppose a horse that shows such superiority at the end of a long fox-chase commands a large sum. I shall order Robson to give you the money to-morrow, or perhaps a check on my banker will be preferable, as you will have to send it to the gentleman by the post.'

'The gentleman is paid for the horse, sir,' said Frank; 'Sir John lent me the money: but now we are on the subject of money, I have a few words to say to you, and a better opportunity may not, perhaps, present itself, as I am going from home to-morrow for a week or ten days. As my poor elder brother is now no longer a charge upon you, perhaps you will have the kindness to increase my allowance, for I should be very sorry to find myself involved in debts which I could not readily pay.'

'I am glad to hear you say so,' replied Mr. Raby: 'as for myself, I never had the courage to get into debt; but, Frank, have you quite abandoned the idea of going abroad? Your uncle is very anxious that you should go, and I must say I am not a little so myself.'

'I am sorry to thwart the wishes of either yourself or my uncle,' resumed our hero; 'but, upon my word, I do not see the use of my incurring such an expense. Besides, in what shall I be better for visiting foreign countries, when I cannot talk or understand the language of them? You know Doctor Johnson has put it in black and white—that he never met with a man who could *talk* a whit the better for having been abroad;

and as for *writing* the better for it, I do not suppose my scribbling propensities will ever exceed a few short epistles to my friends. At the same time, if yourself and my uncle *particularly* wish that I should travel, I am ready, though I cannot say willing, to make the required sacrifice.'

'We will drop the subject,' said the father; 'I will never ask a son of mine to do that which I perceive he is really averse to: neither is it a point so near to my heart as to that of your Uncle Beaumont, for reasons which I have heard him give. I confess, my chief desire is, that you should learn to fulfil the duties of a country gentleman and large landed proprietor—not a few, I assure you—and for which, perhaps, England may, after all, prove the best school. But, Francis, what is all this I have heard from Lady Charlotte to-day about your going to keep race-horses?'

'Why, sir,' replied our hero, somewhat taken aback; 'I am very fond, as you know, of the animal, horse, and have noticed the great pleasure my friend Dauntley takes in breeding. I was just asking Robson yesterday, as I was walking with him in the park, what he thought would be the expense of a few paddocks for the purpose; and likewise, if you did not object, what part of the park would be the fittest, at the same time not within sight from the house.'

'Paddocks in the park, my dear Frank!' exclaimed Mr. Raby; 'I cannot consent to anything of the sort. I should be sorry to see the pastoral character of this fine park defiled by a parcel of fiery-red brick walls. Then you quote your friend Dauntley as a precedent for this frolic of yours! You must bear in mind that Dauntley has twice as many thousands a year as you have hundreds, and perhaps you have no idea of the expense of a breeding stud on ever so small a scale. I am told that the annual expense of a mare, including her produce, exceeds a hundred pounds, saying nothing of the chapter of accidents, and the probability of the produce not being worth as many shillings after another hundred have been expended upon him. In fact, it is asserted, and I believe on good authority, that the present Lord Grosvenor, although a winner of the immense sum of £200,000, is still a loser by his breeding paddocks, all expenses being reckoned. Moreover, Frank, although it has been noted for lovers of all field sports—indeed your Uncle Beaumont and poor Andrew are the only exceptions within the last 200 years—the name of Raby has never yet appeared to a race-horse; nor am I by any means anxious that it should. A fox-hunter you may be, with my hearty approbation; it is getting to the top branch of the tree, although I had not the nerve to ascend so high; it is there, I believe, that perfection is to be found. But I would not combine the pursuits which are in themselves so opposite; it would resemble the mingling of garlands of roses with the poison of deadly nightshade. But to the point, Frank; I will increase your allowance to £800 a year, paid half-yearly; I will pay for the hunter you have just bargained for, and for another as good, if you can find him; and then I should imagine, with what is vulgarly termed the run of your own teeth, and those of your horses and servants at home, when you wish to be at home, you will not only have no cause for complaint, but be enabled to make as good an appearance, and enjoy yourself as much as any other young heir-apparent in this country, or the next.'

Here our hero nodded assent, and afterwards acknowledged the kindness of his father in common-place words, which it may not be worth while to repeat. But a bystander would have observed a something in his manner at the moment, which too plainly showed the final result of the conversation was by no means satisfactory. In fact, though scotched, the snake was not killed, and Frank said within himself, 'If I am not permitted to *breed* him, I am determined to *have* a race-horse, before I am much older.'

Now, as it has been my desire to draw a portrait of Frank Raby in his own true character—one which, on the whole, does honour to our nature—I must endeavour not only to account for, but to smooth down this too apparent disregard of the wishes of a kind and indulgent parent. The real truth, then, is this, startling as it may appear:—racing has been represented, and justly, in my opinion, to be a stimulus acting powerfully on the generous ambition of man, prompting him to personal exertion, and highly exciting to *superiority*. What, then, is the result? Why, that, as a man now and then violates his best principles for a woman, he now and then violates them for a horse. Such, it appears, had been the impression made on Frank Raby by his late intercourse with Lord Dauntley, who had been introduced to him by his friend

Goodall, by the well-conducted breeding establishment that he had formed, together with his temporary success—for he had just won the Oaks, and had run second for the St. Leger—that he had made a vow to himself, that, before he was three years older, he would win a Derby or an Oaks, if money or management could effect it.

CHAPTER X

Our sportsman has now entered in earnest upon his life. He refuses a seat in Parliament, and studies his craft with enthusiasm, opening his first regular hunting campaign with the Warwickshire, under the celebrated Mr. Corbet, and the Pytchley, under the great John Warde.

On his return to the Abbey, after a week's absence on a visit to his friend Lord Dauntley, he found the following letter from his uncle:—

'Harley Street, January 10, 1802.

'Dear Frank,—

'As I do not expect to see you in town till the hunting season closes, I write to inform you, that a friend of mine and your father has intimated to me his intention of retiring from the fatigues of parliamentary life in consequence of ill-health, and made an offer of the borough to me, which, being a close one, he has, of course, the power to do. My taking it is out of the question; but, as you are aware it was very much my wish that your poor brother should have been in the House, and the voice of a Raby once more listened to with attention within its walls—which would certainly have been the case if that wish had been granted me—I am particularly desirous that *you* should accept the proffered boon. It will be an excellent introduction into life, and, situated as you now are, I consider it little short of a point of duty that you should avail yourself of this offer.

'I fancy that I may be met with some objections from yourself; indeed, I will at once anticipate them, at the same time endeavour to remove them. You may tell me, you have no oratorical talent, but you must allow me to tell you what you have been before told (*nascimur poetæ, fimus oratores*), that every highly-educated man has it in his power to speak well. To become a perfect orator, perhaps, one must be endued by nature with a genius superior to the bulk of mankind; yet pains and industry may make any person possessing a good judgment and ordinary imagination, a tolerable speaker, especially if he set about improving himself when young—by making himself master of the great events, and of the principal characters which are handed down to us in history, and thus laying in such a store of knowledge as will be ready at hand on almost all occasions. And history will not only furnish you with the best materials and groundwork of public speaking, but it will also furnish you with the best models. To imitate the brightest examples, and to follow the steps of those who have been ornaments of human nature, and an honour to their country, should be the study and desire of every English gentleman. Your first attempt may fail, as did that of the greatest orator the world ever saw: but, like him, do not be discouraged; and remember that *my* first attempt was crowned with complete success. The effects of a good classical education shine brilliantly when least expected, which, I believe I may say, was my own case: a scripture expression has weight in a popular assembly, but nothing impresses so strongly as a highly classical allusion.

'As to the line of conduct you may choose to adopt—in other words, as to which side of the House you may give your support—I leave that to your own discretion. My own politics are soon told. I would support the rights of the people to their full extent, without losing sight of the principles of the constitution, and my duty to my king and country. We want not another Theseus here, who, as Aristotle says, "parted with regal power for popular favour"; nor would I recommend you to press any political point further than is consonant with the general sense of the community. And here I speak from what I have read or seen. If any state has happened to experience—to whatever cause it might be owing—a sudden change in its system of government; if an alteration in its established forms has been brought about by means which were uncalled for, it has almost always either relapsed into its ancient channel, or else the change has been attended with very disastrous circumstances.

'My sermon is concluded. Ponder seriously, my dear nephew, on what it contains, with a full assurance that it is intended for your benefit, and qualify yourself for the task I wish you to perform. Speech being the faculty which exalts man above the rest of the creation, we must consider *eloquence* as the talent which gives him the most distinguished pre-eminence over his own species. Study it, then, as you regard the wishes—I may say more—the *desires* of

'Your affectionate uncle,
'BEAUMONT RABY.'

To this epistle, our hero returned the following reply:—

'MY DEAR UNCLE,—

'It is with much regret that I find myself compelled to decline complying with any wish of yours, particularly with one so earnestly expressed as that which is the subject of your last kind letter. But the fact is, being confident that my enjoyment of life is one of the objects most dear to your heart, I have less compunction in refusing to grant your present request than I should otherwise feel. I have more than one objection to becoming a member of Parliament. First, on the score of expense, for, as it is my wish to keep not less than six hunters (I have four now—my father has just made me a present of two), and I mean to be absent from home, in some of the best hunting countries, during the winter, it would surely involve me in expenses which I might not be able to meet, for, as you are aware, my allowance from my father is only £800 a year. Then, again, of what use should I be in Parliament with my slender experience of the world, and no knowledge of business beyond adding up a bill? I suppose I might, if called upon, make a tolerable speech—that is to say, if it were on a subject with which I was conversant; and without being so, the tongue of the Demosthenes would be useless. But, to tell you the truth, I am not so much enamoured as yourself, with the effects of fine oratory; neither do I think it is altogether necessary to dress up the new-born occurrences of the day in the pompous robe of history. Your fine talkers always remind me of the fable of Narcissus—they fall in love with their own voices, as he did with his own face. Did the flaming speeches or strong remonstrances of Demosthenes (indeed, old Juvenal tells us he had better have remained a blacksmith) banish corruption from Athens? Did what is called the masterpiece of Cicero's orations prevent the banishment of Milo, or his invective against Antony destroy the power of that tyrant? Was not He "who spake as never man spake," disregarded and persecuted to death by the multitude? Can human elocution perform what divine accomplishments and assistance were not able to effect? No, uncle, in matters of common life, and also in the House of Commons, it is not so much *what is said*, as *who said it*, that has weight. In short, I look upon oratory as a two-edged weapon, which cuts both ways; and if my scanty knowledge of history has led me to a right conclusion, it is much to be doubted whether the gift of fine speaking, though both excellent and useful in its nature, has not been applied in such a manner as to do more harm than good. Factious demagogues, in the shape of fine speakers, have too often led the multitude captive, by first deceiving, and afterwards plundering and destroying them. I have now, my dear uncle, nothing more to say on this subject than to assure you that it is one on which I hope you will not press me further, inasmuch as it gives me great pain to dissent from your opinion, or thwart your wishes. On all other points, I trust you will find me, what I hope you have hitherto found me,

'Your affectionate and dutiful nephew,
'FRANCIS RABY.

'Beaumont Raby, Esq., etc. etc. etc.

'*P.S.*—I forgot to mention one more objection to being in Parliament. The House meets in the month of February, decidedly the best month in the year for fox-hunting. Then there is a call of the House, perhaps, just as you had set your heart on some favourite fixtures. Dauntley tells me, he never takes up a newspaper in the hunting season, but he trembles for the words—"The Lords summoned."'[1]

As may be imagined, the contents of this letter, as far as they related to the offer of the borough, and the hopes of the uncle for the future renown of his nephew, were by no means agreeable to Mr. Beaumont Raby; but enough has been said of his character to make it apparent that he did not take the trouble to renew his solicitation by letter. In mere acknowledgment, then, of our hero's determination to refuse the proffered boon, he thus expressed himself in return:—

'Your letter, my dear Frank, which I received yesterday, was to me rather an annoyance than a matter of surprise. I now plainly see through all your distant views; that you are determined to be a sportsman, and to lead a country life. Well, I know not how I can blame you on the principle of Horace, who, with his usual good discretion, tells us, that we should neither commend our own tastes, nor censure those of others; neither will I blame you, provided you bear in mind that the alternate pleasure of reading and recreation is the happy privilege of retired leisure. That you will descend so low in the scale of intellectual beings, whose minds have been cultivated, as to assume the character of *the mere sportsman,* I cannot, for a moment, induce myself to suppose: such a person is now happily becoming scarce; and the badge of a liberal education is not, as it was used to be, all at once thrown aside. Let me, however, as you are about to launch into what may be called promiscuous society, which that of sportsmen must generally be termed, offer to your notice a few hints, a close attention to which may turn to your account, as you pass through life.

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[1] It is a well-known fact that on two celebrated Meltonians requesting to be excused sitting on a committee of the House, the Speaker observed, that he believed 'the month of February was the best hunting month in the year.'

'Civility and good breeding are generally considered synonymous terms, but they are not such. Good breeding implies civility, but civility does not reciprocally imply good breeding. Good breeding is the middle point between two extremes,—between flattery and sincerity. It is to be acquired partly by a knowledge of the world, but chiefly by keeping good company. It is, I admit, difficult to be defined, inasmuch as it consists in a fitness and propriety of words, actions, and looks, adapted to the variety and combination of persons, places, and things; but it covers a multitude of faults, and, to a certain degree, supplies the want of virtues. In the common course of life it is invaluable, keeping people within the bounds of decency, checking familiarity, and restraining excesses. It is, in fact, the ornament and cement of social life. Great talents make a man famous; learning causes him to be esteemed: but it is good breeding—which is something more than an accomplishment—that alone renders him beloved. We will talk over these matters when you come to town, which I suppose you will do in the spring, when all the world is here; and till then, and always,

'I remain, your affectionate uncle,
'BEAUMONT RABY

'To Francis Raby, Esq.'

The remainder of this winter passed away very agreeably with our hero, who may be said to have been qualifying for those which were to follow, by improving himself in riding and shooting, and in all the other branches of what may be called 'rural education and accomplishments.' Amongst the novelties, however, was a prize-fight, of which, as his friend Sir John Inkleton was, to a certain extent, a backer of one of the men, he became a spectator. He, however, returned from the spectacle very little gratified; and, despite of the encomiums bestowed upon boxing by his companion,—who maintained that it preserved the vigour and characteristic courage of the English people, which had raised this country above the other nations of the earth; that, although the same God who made man rational also made him resentful, it was the characteristic of Englishmen to be resentful of insult only, but not to be vindictive, and which was to be attributed to the same cause, also reminding his young friend of the splendid encomium on boxing in Knight's *Analysis of Taste*, just then published,—agreed with what Cicero had said of the gladiators, namely, that the exhibition satiated whilst it lasted, and left no satisfaction in the reflection of it. Inasmuch as this was the first, so it was the last of these exhibitions which Frank Raby attended; but by way of showing the difference in the style in which the records of such events are handed down, I subjoin that of the one now alluded to. Whether such things are unworthy of a memorial, or whether the pen which perpetuates them is debased, is not for me to determine, but the improvement in the style in which they are recorded is remarkable, and not, I should imagine, to be excelled. And who can doubt but that this adds to their celebrity? 'The Athenians,' says Sallust, 'were clever fellows, but they owed much to their historians, who made them as clever as their own wit and talent could represent them.'

'Harlston, in Norfolk, July 30.—Yesterday, in the afternoon, Slack and Pettit met and fought. At the first set-to, Pettit seized Slack by the throat, and held him up against the rails, and grained him so much as to make him extremely black. This continued for half a minute before Slack could break Pettit's hold, after which, for near ten minutes, Pettit kept fighting and driving hard at Slack, when at length Slack closed with his antagonist, and gave him a very severe fall; after that, a second and a third; but between these falls Pettit threw Slack twice off the stage, and, indeed, Pettit so much dreaded Slack's falls, that he ran directly at his hams, and tumbled him down, and by that means gave Slack an opportunity of making the falls very easy. When they had been fighting eighteen minutes, the odds ran against Slack, a guinea to a shilling; whereas, on first setting out, it was three or four to one on his head; but after this time Slack shortened Pettit so as to disable him from running and throwing him down in the manner he had done before, but obliged him to stand to close fighting. Slack then closed one of his eyes, and beat him very much about the face. At twenty minutes, Pettit grew weaker, Slack stronger. This was occasioned by Slack's straight way of fighting. At twenty-two minutes, the best judge allowed Slack to have the advantage over Pettit very considerably, as he was then recovering his wind, which was owing to game. When they had boxed twenty-four minutes, Pettit threw Slack again over the rails. This, indeed, Slack suffered him to do, as by that means he fixed a blow under Pettit's ribs, that hurt him much. Whilst Slack was again getting upon the stage (it was not half a minute before he was remounted), Pettit had so much the fear of his antagonist before his eyes, that he walked off without so much as civilly taking leave of the spectators, or saying anything to any person. This the backers call rogueing of it, for it is generally thought that he ran away full strong. The whole time of their fighting was twenty-five minutes; and this morning the battle was given to Slack, who drew the first ten guineas out of the box. Thus ended this dreadful combat.'

The month of May having arrived, our hero, after a fortnight's good sport in trout-fishing, repaired to 'the great city' for several weighty purposes. One was, to make up matters with his uncle, by convincing him, which was true, that he had no business in Parliament; another, to purchase two more horses at Tattersall's; and here he was guided by the advice of one able to render it.

'Purchase those,' said his adviser, 'which have been ridden over grass countries, such as Leicestershire or Northamptonshire, where the fences are high and *wide*, and where there are brooks. Half the horses called hunters are all but worthless to hard-riding men, by having been ridden in countries where the fences are chiefly dead hedges, with small ditches and timber, but no strong, live, blackthorn hedges, which horses must push through, and leap a wide ditch beyond them as well, and where there are no brooks of any width, many of which, indeed, horses can walk through.'

He took his friend's advice, and purchased two well-seasoned geldings that had had many a hot spirt over the deep vale of Belvoir, and the cream of the Quorndon country, and at the moderate price of 300 guineas for the two.

Epsom and Ascot were also taken in their turn, and neither of them without their impression on our hero. When contemplating with himself, at the latter place, as to the means by which he could put his resolves into effect, as to *once* signalising himself on the turf, the following rather curious coincidence happened. He was thus accosted by his friend Dauntley:—

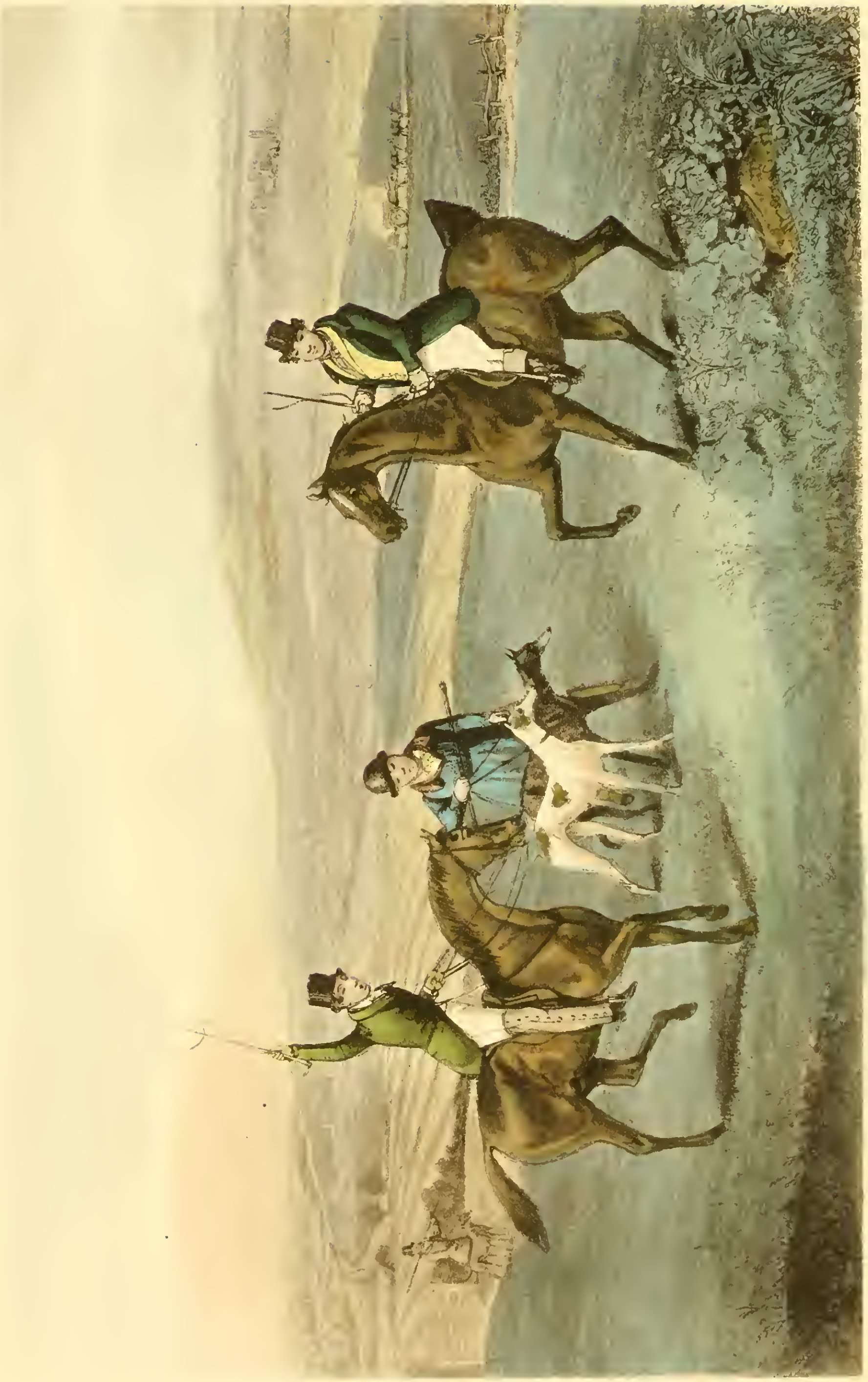
'I have a word to say to you, Raby,' said he. 'I have just heard of a person in a retired part of Wales,—a devilish good judge of racing, mind ye,—who has two two-year-old fillies of his own breeding (and very well bred they are) to sell, and both are in the next year's Oaks. He will take 400 guineas for them, and I strongly recommend you to purchase them, as you wish to have a shy at the turf. At all events, they are dog-cheap.'

'Cheap enough, no doubt,' replied Frank, 'but I must look out for the money before I open my mouth wider. I cannot spare such a sum out of my allowance.'

'Certainly not,' replied Lord Dauntley; 'but I will manage that part of the affair. I will lend you the money, and I have a friend who will let the fillies run in his name, and they can go to my trainer's, or any other you may prefer.'

No sooner said than done. The fillies—and very clever ones they were—were purchased, and, soon after the following Christmas, put into training in the name of *Darkin*, but, as they had not made their appearance as two-year-olds, were not even named in the betting. In fact, in the true acceptation of the term, they were dark ones.

Nothing very remarkable occurred to our hero during his stay in London, which did not exceed six weeks, although he was very far from being idle. In addition to the purchase of the two hunters, he gave orders for a comfortable travelling



"Soho!"

post-chaise to one of the best builders in the Acre, and furnished his saddle-room with everything wanting for his stud. He also purchased two brace of greyhounds, at rather a high figure, which, after having defeated the parson's famous bitch, *Fly*, that had been the terror of the Club in his neighbourhood for two successive years, he made a present of to Perren, having no turn for coursing. Having then replenished his fishing-book with some of the best tackle and flies, he took leave of his uncle, whose house had been his home during his visit, his uncle taking leave of him in nearly these words:—

'God bless you, Frank; I wish our pursuits were more congenial; but still, although they are as wide apart as the poles, I wish you to excel in yours, as I might have excelled in mine, but for a constitutional infirmity. This,' putting a £100 bank-note into his hand, 'will not *retard* your progress; and if at any time you require the fellow to it, you have nothing more to do than to say so.'

The month of August found our hero snugly domiciled in the Highlands of Scotland, on the shooting-ground engaged by Lord Dauntley, and where, with the accession of another friend of his Lordship, a delightful month was passed. The return of the game killed was as follows, which was not amiss for that period, when it was not so abundant as at present:—

Black grouse, seven and a half brace; red grouse, eighty-five brace; ptarmigan, three and a half brace; red deer, seven; and roe, thirteen.

But something more important and more durable than grouse and deer was the result of this excursion. The trio returned to England with their nerves braced, ready to crack, by the exercise upon, and the breathing the air of, the truly romantic regions of the north; and each came to the resolution that the excursion should be repeated during the next twenty years, should life and health be so long granted to them to enjoy it, for this was true enjoyment. Exclusive of the actual diversion on the moors, everything they ate was delicious; the champagne and claret were nectar; their beds were beds of roses; *but why?* Because hunger is the best sauce; exercise refines the palate, and gives additional *goût* to wine; and hard must be that bed on which sound and refreshing sleep is denied to the man who has had a good day's grouse-shooting over the Scotch hills, or those of any other country on which that noble game is to be found! There was, indeed, but one drawback from the sum-total of happiness of which this party were partakers, and this was—'the reckoning.' Including the rent of the shooting-ground, it amounted to nearly £600, to be divided into three parts, our hero's proportion being rather an awkward set-off against the annual amount of his income, which, as has been already stated, did not exceed £800. To the others of the party it was a flea-bite.

In the circle of British sports, fox-hunting ever must and will take the precedence; and towards the end of October, having, up to that period, hunted with his father's harriers, and satisfied himself of the efficiency of his stud, Frank Raby determined on making his *début* as a fox-hunter, but not his election of hounds and country, until experience of some of the best of them had fully enabled him to decide as to which to give the preference. Of Oxfordshire he had had a taste during his residence at Oxford, and this was the opinion he had formed of it:—the hill country was light and uncertain with regard to scent, but a clean and gentlemanlike one to ride over, and contained many excellent sportsmen. The vale called the Bicester country was preferable; he considered it, despite of its large woods on one side of it, and the almost fathomless depth of its soil after a hard frost succeeded by rain, what may be termed a fox-hunting country, and he had seen some fine runs in it. A criterion of the strength of it, he used to say, might be ascertained by the fact, that not only did the Oxford livery stable-keepers charge a third more for horses ridden over it by the gownsmen than they did for those ridden over the hill country, but the calculation of falls, by the riders of them, was in the proportion of three to one in favour of the vale: that is to say, there were three falls in the vale, to one in the hill country. But the Northamptonshire side of the country, he used to say, cannot be ridden over without falls by a man who is determined to be with hounds.

There was likewise another country which he had had a taste of when at Oxford, and that was what was called the Vale of White Horse, adjoining to the Craven country; and, although in the county of Berks, some of its best covers were within easy reach of Oxford. He liked parts of that country much: being a dairy country, it abounded in fine large grass fields, and he was told that such parts of it strongly resembled Leicestershire. He had also a regard for it, on another consideration. In a fine run from Pusey Firs, he was one of only five who cleared the Rosey Brook, himself taking the lead upon Achilles, although, as somewhat of a take off from the merit of it, it had been leaped, nearly in the same place, by Mr. Barry Price, upon his famous horse called Monarch, a few days before—the said Mr. Barry Price being eighteen stone plum weight in the scales. But the Rosey Brook is, in most places, a very serious affair.

Our hero, up to this period, had had but a slight taste of Warwickshire, and this at two of its least inviting fixtures; namely, Wolford Wood, and Witchford Wood, almost the only two covers within possible reach of Oxford men; roughish places, both of them, but often holding, as most rough places do, very capital foxes. But Frank Raby had heard enough of Warwickshire to induce him to make it his election for his *début* on the fox-hunter's stage, so sent his stud to Stratford-on-Avon, the head-quarters of the Hunt; and arrived there himself, in his travelling chaise, on the evening of the fourth of November, anno Domini, 1803.

He found a highly finished gentleman at the head of this establishment, in the person of Mr. Corbet, of Sundorne Castle, Shropshire, who himself sustained the expenses of it, keeping a complement of hounds and horses for four days a week, and occasionally a fifth; having two kennels, one at Stratford-on-Avon, and another at Minden, near Coventry, whence the country called 'The Mereden' was hunted at two different periods in the season, but chiefly in the spring, for which it is eminently adapted. He soon obtained an introduction to the members of the Stratford Hunt Club, whom he found living together on the best possible terms—Mr. Corbet joining them at dinner on every Thursday in the week, and commonly entertaining some of them on the other six days. He found a man hunting these hounds, whom, although he was too young to give an opinion on his merits as a huntsman, he pronounced to be the finest horseman, in the form of a servant, he had ever hitherto seen; and it was told of him that, during his service with that eminent sportsman, Mr. Childe, of Kinlet Hall, in Shropshire, as whipper-in, he was the only man in his establishment that he would ever suffer to mount the horses he himself rode. His name was William Barrow, commonly called Will Barrow, and his brother Jack, also good in his place, acted as his first whip. He saw a month's very good sport with these hounds, and he saw some right good sportsmen in the field; but what surprised him most, was the fact that the two leading men over this strongly fenced and, in parts, very deep country, weighed, with their saddles, good seventeen stone. The name of these eminent horsemen and sportsmen was Canning, the elder possessing a large property in the country, and the younger also in possession of a very considerable income. But the most extraordinary part of the history of these gentlemen as sportsmen, is the fact of their having—by reason of being Catholics—been educated abroad, and never seeing a foxhound in the field until past their twenty-fifth year. The younger, Mr. Robert Canning, was the finest horseman of the two; but their knowledge of fox-hunting, and their judgment in riding to hounds, were not inferior to those of the most experienced sportsman of the day. Mr. Hawkes, so celebrated as an amateur jockey, and a conspicuous man with Mr. Meynell's hounds in Leicestershire, also then resided in Warwickshire, and was occasionally seen, and, as it fell out at this identical time, by our hero, gallantly crossing its large grass enclosures on his thorough-bred nags, delighted with the cheering voice of Will Barrow to his 'lasses,' as he was used to call the bitch pack; and, certainly, no human voice ever exceeded his in a view-halloo or a cheer. But

'What more grateful to the ear,
Than the voice that speaks to cheer?'

There was another very remarkable character, in the shape of a sportsman of the old school, residing in the town of Stratford, but a member of the Stratford Hunt, and an intimate friend of Mr. Corbet. His name was Stubbs; and so insatiate was he of hunting, that, on the vacant days of the foxhounds, he hunted with his own harriers; and, indeed, on one occasion, on *a Sunday*, when a fox broke out of his saddle-room, during divine service. 'Saddle the dun horse,' said he to his man, when he told him what had happened, and he immediately put his hounds on the scent. But what was most remarkable in this very zealous fox-hunter, was the fact that, when hounds ran straight across a country, he could neither see nor hear him, as he could not persuade himself to leap fences; and yet, from his great knowledge of the country, he was generally up soon after the finish, whatever that might be. Mr. Corbet also surprised our hero by his great dislike to fences, which he found it difficult to reconcile with the enthusiasm he exhibited in the chase; he, however, by being mounted on very speedy horses, and not afraid to gallop over the *worst sort of ground*, saw a great deal of the sport, appearing at times in a good place when very little expected. And Frank Raby took a leaf out of his book, as regarded his hunters, of which he had always a score of a very good sort. He purchased them, when foals, from his tenants and other farmers in Shropshire, which county has always been celebrated for good hunting blood.

Our hero's opinion of Warwickshire was this. He found a great many bad fixtures for hounds in it, although it was possible that, even from them, by taking a certain line, a fine run, over a fine country, was on the cards. For example, he went one morning a long distance to a cover which was in bad repute with the Hunt, and whence he was told he had scarcely a chance of a run. The fox led him over twelve miles of country, at the very best pace, with only one ploughed field by the way, no river to cross, and only two brooks, and those not serious ones! But he found some parts of the country which could not be excelled anywhere—and these to a large extent; and that part which was not good had this redeeming quality:—a blank day in Warwickshire, at this time, was as rare as a black swan in all other countries.

After a month's sojourn in Warwickshire, where he received some kind attention from several of the principal families, which his name and connections might have ensured him, he took his departure for Northampton, and became domiciled at the George Inn, in the county town, one of the most comfortable in England. The country—the word *county* is obsolete, in alluding to hunting districts—was then occupied by Mr. Warde, whose kennel was at Pytchley, where the Club was also established. This was a fortunate circumstance for our hero, inasmuch as it gave him an opportunity of witnessing the proceedings of what may be termed the second great sportsman of that day—the immortal Meynell, although at that time about to retire from the field, being the first. He was much struck with the peculiar character of the hounds, combining gigantic limbs, and extraordinary height and strength, with high form and symmetry; and their steadiness in chase was also at once conspicuous. The turn-out, however, was not equal to Mr. Corbet's. There was something like an affected disregard of appearances in the costume of the men, and the horses were of a coarser description. Still it was altogether sportsmanlike, for a *sportsman* was at the head of the establishment.

Our hero regretted that he was a few years too late in his visit to this country, by which he lost an opportunity not likely to return: this was, of seeing the celebrated Dick Knight, huntsman to Lord Spencer, who formerly hunted the country; and whose portrait, from the pencil of Mr. Loraine Smith, had helped to adorn the walls of his room in Christchurch College. His noble master, however, he had the pleasure of meeting in the field, and seeing him keep a very good place in a run of an hour and twenty minutes, from Winnick Warren, a cover on the Daventry side the country: his Lordship's son, then Lord Althorp, who afterwards hunted the country, also being one who saw the finish and the death. But, until Frank Raby met Mr. Warde's hounds at a cover in the Crick country, he never knew the extent to which the man who rides after hounds is opposed in his attempts to go straight. Although mounted on the General, one of the finest fencers in England—at least in the parts of England in which he had previously been hunted—he got three falls in little more than as many miles, and lamented that it had not been the turn of one of his newly purchased horses to have carried him on that day, as they were more accustomed than the General to make their way through the enormous blackthorn hedges — to say nothing of the ditches, brooks, and timber, with which this part of Northamptonshire abounds. Frank, however, left the country very highly enamoured of it. It appeared to him to leave both Oxfordshire and Warwickshire very far in the shade, and he nearly despaired—not but that there are some rough fixtures in Northamptonshire—of ever seeing a better. In fact, when he was told that there were woodlands in it, near to the town of Kettering, the property of the Duke of Buccleugh, in which were seventy miles of finely rideable avenues, from which hounds could never be out of sight of the men, for the purposes of cub and spring hunting, he seemed to make up his mind that, taken for all in all, *Northamptonshire as a hunting country could not be much excelled.*

As may be imagined, for it is particularly the case with young sportsmen, our hero noticed the best horsemen in each country he visited, and those of Northamptonshire did not escape his rather discerning eye. Mr. Warde never shone as a rider; that is, he was not, even in those days, what is called a fast man over a country; nor, indeed, have there been more than a dozen 'fast men' of his weight since the world was created; but his two brothers went well: Harry Warde, as he was called (afterwards General Sir Harry), in particular, quite tip-top; and what very much surprised the 'young one,' was the fact of his very best horse being a roarer. Then there was one man in the throng, to whose horsemanship rather a far-fetched epithet might be applied; it was *beautiful.* I allude to Mr. Davy, who has hunted in Northamptonshire, I believe, ever since: and, as somewhat of a strange coincidence, there was a singular defect in his best horse. He had but half an eye, having quite lost the sight of one, and a cataract was formed over part of the pupil of the other. He called him Skylark, and a brilliant hunter he was. There was something aristocratic in the names of these horses—that of the first being *Star*, and the other *Skylark.* And, by the way, Frank Raby heard an extraordinary fact related of this elegant horseman, Mr. Davy. He got a fall in Oxfordshire, and was thrown beyond his horse's head, to the ground. On looking back for his horse, he was *non est inventus.* He had fallen back into an old, deep well, the covering of which had given way under him, as he leaped on it.

Raby, for it may be as well now, sometimes, to drop the Frank, had the pleasure of dining several times at the Club—the famous Pytchley Club, of which so much has been heard and said. Nothing could be more agreeable, and so Mr. Warde himself said.—'All very well but the reckoning,' was the praise he always bestowed upon it. But Mr. Warde himself added prodigiously to the agreeableness of this club, and the high social feeling that pervaded all the members of it. And, as regarded our hero, he was thus heard, on one occasion, to express himself:—

'This young Raby is a promising lad; I think he will do, in time, especially if he stays with *us* for a season or two. I saw him out once, when a school-boy, in the last country I hunted, and devilish well he went. His father is a hare-hunter, but the young one won't have that; he flies at higher game; and, as he will be well breeched some day—for, independent of his father, they tell me he has a rich uncle, likely to choke in his collar, who will leave him lots of the ready—I should not be surprised to see him one of *us*, in another sense. He has asked me a great many questions about hounds, the breeding them, etc., to which I have generally replied, "Keep mine in your eye, sir, and you will do well, should you have a pack of your own, which no doubt you will, when one of the old ones goes to ground." He has also a great mind to be a coachman, which Inkleton has given him a taste for. I told him to go to Jack Bailey, of the Birmingham "Prince of Wales" coach, for instruction, when he told me he was his pupil when at Eton. "Then you will do," said I; "Jack himself is a pattern-card for patience and prudence, having need of both; for heavy loads and weak horses, on bad roads, have made him such. In short, he is a coachman; and I advise you, if you mean to get upon your own box, to take as many leaves as you can out of his book. It will be worth all the Greek and Latin you brought with you from Eton."'

So much for the Pytchley Hunt of those days. Not only

'Those joyous hours are passed away,
And many a heart that then was gay,'

has long since ceased to beat, but the master of the pack, after a stout struggle, has been obliged to yield to that common destiny of our nature, which, sooner or later, awaits us all. Peace to his ashes; his system and himself are gone together.

During his stay, our young sportsman had one day with the well-known pack of the late justly celebrated Lord Fitzwilliam, whose extensive country embraced parts of Northamptonshire, and all Huntingdonshire, besides the Yorkshire woodlands for cub-hunting. The fixture was Stanwick Pastures, one of great note, but far from being one of the best. The scene, however, was such as amused our hero much, since, from being within reach of Cambridge, it reminded him of olden times. In one direction were to be seen knocked-up hacks, broken-down tandems, with the leaders scarcely able to make a walk of it, from the flankings they had received from their rather merciless drivers, in their anxiety to display their art; in another, four or five of the better sort of college sportsmen, whose finances had allowed of their sending hacks forward overnight, coming along at a good cover-hack pace, without showing distress; while, just as the fox was found, up drove a post-chaise, at a gallop, with three red-coats inside, and two on the bar! One or two of these aspirants were well known to Frank Raby, and amongst the lot—quite as many as could be expected—four or five of them rode well and judiciously to the hounds, throughout a really good run of an hour over a right stiff country.

Young Raby's next move was to Leicester, where he took up his abode at the 'Three Crowns Inn,' the principal one of that day, and about as bad as most country inns of that day were found to be. On his road, in his travelling carriage, he amused himself by booking a few of Mr. Warde's sayings and hints; amongst which were the following:—

'Half the goodness of a horse goes in at his mouth.

'Never buy a horse from a rich man who hunts: or from a poor man, till you have tried him.

'Never believe a word any man says about a horse he wishes to sell—not even a bishop.

'Never keep a drinking man, nor a very pretty maid-servant.

'Never refuse a good dinner from home, unless you have a better at home.

'Breed your hounds with bone and nose; without the one they will tire; without the other, become slack.'

CHAPTER XI

The *début* in Leicestershire—Frank Raby hunts with the Quorn under Lord Sefton, with Lord Lonsdale's, and with the Duke of Rutland's hounds.

THE fixture for the Quorn hounds, then lately become the property of Lord Sefton, being very distant from Leicester, Frank Raby had a day to dispose of, and occupied it in a visit to Quorn, for the purpose of looking over the establishment, and much as his expectations had been excited, the reality very much exceeded them. He found more than sixty couples of working hounds in the kennel, exclusive of the pack that day in the field, and they were shown to him by John Raven, one of his Lordship's huntsmen—Stephen Goodall, the other huntsman, being at work on that day. Then, in one stable he saw twenty-eight hunters, all in the finest condition, the building being so contrived that each horse could be seen from his head to his tail by a person standing in the centre of it. In the boxes, he saw some of his Lordship's best horses—Plato, Rowland, and Gooseberry amongst them, which cost little less than 1000 guineas apiece—and they excited his admiration, not only by their high form, but by their condition, which equalled everything that Mr. Somerby had told him of it during his visit to Amstead, and to which we have already alluded. They were shown to him by Mr. Potter, his Lordship's head groom, who told him that 'every gentleman's hunters might be in as good condition as Lord Sefton's were, provided they were similarly treated, and not turned out to grass in the summer.'

There being no one about the house but servants, Frank Raby ventured to walk through the grounds of Quorndon Hall (for such is the name of this celebrated hunting-box), celebrated as having been the property and residence of Mr. Meynell, and purchased of him by Lord Sefton—and found it exactly what Mr. Somerby had represented it to be; namely, a complete residence for a sportsman, affording all necessary accommodation, though divested of unnecessary ornament, and pretending to nothing beyond the residence of a quiet country gentleman. The grounds, however, he found rather prettily laid out, having the advantage of the river Soar running through them; not that there is much to admire beyond the fact of its being *water*—which makes all scenery agreeable—in the still and even flow of a deep Leicestershire stream.

The next day to this was one of intense interest to our hero, who was to make his first appearance with hounds in Leicestershire, having been informed by a letter from Mr. Somerby, that he had taken stables and apartments for him at Melton Mowbray, and that he should have much pleasure in paving the way to his arrival thither, by introducing him to some of the leading characters of the Quorn, and also of the neighbouring hunts. He felt a buoyancy of heart almost inexpressible on the occasion; in fact, he never before felt it beat so high, for, although fearless in his person, he could not divest himself of the notion that riding to hounds over Leicestershire, and amongst Leicestershire men, was something very different from what he had hitherto seen it in what Leicestershire men call the 'provincials.' His master-passion, however, was well roused on the occasion, and, without indulging himself in the absurdity of being able to 'dare impossibilities,' was determined to do his best.

The fixture was Cream Lodge Gorse, in the township of Great Dalby, and no misnomer either, forasmuch as it is in the cream of the Quorn country; and a horse called Gentleman, one of the two purchased at Tattersall's, was sent forward by our young sportsman for the occasion, he himself following on his hack, his carriage having been despatched to Melton with his luggage. On his arrival at the cover, he was immediately met by Mr. Somerby, and, in the course of the day, introduced by him to the following leading characters of those truly sporting days:—

To Lord Sefton, of course, as master of the hounds, and also to Mr. Meynell, who, although no longer a master, was in the field: to the Lords Villiers, Maynard, Charles Somerset, Craven, and Foley; to the Honourable George Germaine, the Honourable Robert Grosvenor, the Honourable Joshua Vanneck, the Honourable Berkeley Craven, and the Honourable Martin Hawke: to Sirs John Shelley, Robert Langley, Henry

Peyton, and Stephen Glynne; to Messieurs Cecil Forester, Thomas Cholmondeley, Loraine Smith, Childe of Kinlet, Charles Meynell, Harvey Aston, John Musters, Thomas Assheton Smith, Lindon, Langton, John Hawkes, John Lochley, and Jacob Wardell.

But he was nearly lost in admiration at the splendid sight that presented itself. In addition to the gratification of seeing what was considered the crack pack of foxhounds of all Europe, in the crack country, with John Raven as their huntsman, of whom he had heard such a character from Mr. Somerby, together with the above-named galaxy of sportsmen, and at least 150 well-mounted men besides, several of whom were eminent men in this line—independently of all this, I say, he saw no less than six splendid teams—the noble master's amongst them—that had been driven to cover by their owners, as was very much the fashion of those highly aristocratic, as well as 'truly sporting days.' And why should I not name them? They were the teams of Lords Sefton and Foley; of the Honourable Martin Hawke; of Sirs Henry Peyton and Stephen Glynne; and of Mr. Harvey Aston. In fact, he had now before his eyes, what were, in those days, popularly considered, hounds, horses, men, and country, not to be equalled in any part of the world, and that, it must be allowed, is saying a great deal.

Although foxes in Leicestershire were not at this time so plentiful as they are at present, the amount of noses on the Quorn kennel door averaging little more than fifty brace, and this with, perhaps, the best hounds in England,—a smart little empty vixen went gallantly away from Cream Gorse this morning, in less than ten minutes after the pack were thrown into it, and none the slower for one of John Raven's thrilling view-halloos as she crept out of the gorse nearly under his own horse's feet. '*Possunt, quia posse videntur,*' being the Leicestershire men's motto, they only waited for some part of the hounds to get upon the scent before they were all at their speed, determined to be with them, let whatever might oppose them; in other words, to go till they fell, or their horses could no longer go. And this was the way in which they did go, at least such of them as came under the notice of our hero, who thus noted them in his book, and sent a copy of his remarks to Sir John:—

'Jacob Wardell, on a weedy thorough-bred one, looking nearly as fit to be carried by, as to carry his rider, with a hooked stick in his right hand, one end of it resting on his shoulder, and his own head nearly as high as the top of it, went away with the lead at a pace that could scarcely be maintained on a race-course, still less over ridge and furrowed grass land, on a stiff clay bottom; and, although he held the lead gallantly for the first four fields, was at length laid flat on his back in a wide, broad ditch, and leaped over, as he lay there, by Forester, and three more whose persons I could not distinguish, being a good land's length in the rear of them. By a lucky turn in my favour, however, I soon got alongside them, and found them to be Lord Villiers on one of his two famous black horses that Mr. Somerby had told me of, Mr. Childe, Mr. Cholmondeley, and Mr. Smith, Mr. Germaine and Mr. Musters lying a little to their left. I was delighted to find myself in such company, but fearing I should soon be cut by them, as we used to say at Eton, and recollecting an aphorism of Egerton's, that example is the best instructor, I determined on endeavouring to follow Mr. Forester so long as my horse enabled me to do so. And now for the result, which I could not have believed prior to the experience of it. When, at about half a field's distance from him, I saw him take each fence as it came, I repeatedly said within myself, that's nothing at all events—adding, where are your big Leicestershire fences? But I was as oftentimes deceived, when I came up to them, by finding them very big. *But how is this?* I would exclaim. Neither Forester nor his horse appeared to make more exertion to get over those strong bullock fences than they might have made in clearing a dead hedge and small ditch. I was told it was all the effect of hand—of handing his horses, as it were, easily and tenderly over their fences; not allowing them to leap a yard higher, or farther, than was necessary. That is the man for me.

'But I was soon obliged to decline keeping such good company; the pace was beyond what I had been used to, and my place was taken by Sir Henry Peyton on Watchmaker, Lord Foley, and Lindon, who appeared to be just about my own age. This gave me encouragement. "I see the young ones can do it," said I; "so I must not despair." But where were the old ones? Why, in about three more fields I heard a thrilling scream, that seemed to enter into my soul, and looking to my left, there saw Mr. Meynell, and also Mr. Loraine Smith, who, having taken advantage of a turn, the result of a quick eye, were then close to the pack. But where was Martin Hawke, of whose desperate style of riding I had been told so much by Mr. Somerby. He was not then to be seen, having had a fall over a gate which would have stopped a red-deer. But what surprised me most, was the pace at which Lord Sefton passed me in the middle of a large field, and the quickness with which he made up his ground, having had a bad start. Young Raven, the huntsman's son, however, was behind him, mounted on one of his horses, on to which he jumped at the very first opportunity; and well it was that he did so, for neither money nor condition could maintain that speed long under sixteen stone. Still there were several heavy men going well; amongst them, Mr. Lockly, on a superb horse, called Confidence, for which I heard he had refused 800 guineas. But this reminds me of a sad disaster, which chilled the pleasure of this fine run. At the first check, Mr. Loraine Smith's horse, whose name I understood was Hollyhock, and for which Lord Sefton had offered him the above-named sum, dropped down dead, from a rupture of a blood-vessel at the heart. Neither was this the sole disaster. A horse called Hermit, ridden by Captain St. Paul, and which he had only just purchased at the, even then, stiff price of 700 guineas, stood stock-still in the middle of a field, and was only saved from death by a copious bleeding by his master. This, however, gave rise to a rather ludicrous circumstance. A caricature appeared in London, representing the scene, these words being written underneath it:—"An apostle administering comfort to a distressed hermit."

'Up to this time—say twenty minutes—I had been carried, as I thought, well; indeed, one gentleman, whose name I did not know, said to me—"You are going well, sir"; upon which I stroked my horse's neck with my hand, and said to myself, "I have got a superior horse." But I was rather premature in my praises. He very soon did what I did not at all like. He put his fore feet into a ditch, dropped his hinder legs in a small brook, struck the top rail of a timber fence very hard indeed, and was altogether not by half so pleasant a horse to ride as he had been for the first ten minutes. To say the truth, I began not to like it, for the fences got very large and strong, at least so they appeared to me.

'"A very stiff country this, sir," said I to a gentleman in black, who appeared to be going very much at his ease; "devilish big fences, sir."

'"Pretty well for that, sir," he replied; "but you are young enough, and strong enough. You've nothing to do but to throw your heart over them, and follow it."

'My heart, however, proved stouter than my horse. I went boring along, losing ground in every field we entered, and being obliged to turn away from a stiff stile, with a foot-bridge over a brook on the rising side, which I knew I had not in me at the time, I lost sight of the leading men, and of the hounds of course, only making my appearance at the last, by the help of a turnpike road, with the rest of the awkward squad, about ten minutes after the fox had been killed, which he was, at the end of a beautiful and very fast burst of thirty-eight minutes.

'Nevertheless, all things considered, I had not great reason to be dissatisfied with the occurrences of this day. I certainly was in a very good place the first quarter of an hour, and not in a bad one the next five minutes; and, now I think of it, I can account for my not being able to go well to the end of the run. I recollect hearing Mr. Somerby say, when at Amstead, that there was a sort of, not *ad valorem*, but *ad virtutem*, price upon horses that were, as mine were, "well known in Leicestershire." "It depends," said he, "on how long they can go. For example," resumed he, "a horse that can go well for twenty minutes will always fetch his 100 guineas, and if half an hour, double that sum." Now as I only gave 150 guineas for Gentleman, at Tattersall's, I had no reason to expect to have gone farther than I did on that money. I shall, however, in future require a little exposition of the words, "well known in Leicestershire"—whether for good, or for evil.

'I was rather surprised to find, judging from the state of my own horse, and that of many others, that another fox was to be drawn for, as, notwithstanding some of the leading men mounted fresh horses, others rode the same which had carried them so forward in the first severe burst. This, however, was another proof of the superiority of these horses; and when next in want of hunters, it shall be from amongst such as are known to do such things that I shall make my selection, and not from those which are well known to be able to jump a few tremendous fences, and travel at the *ultra* pace for a short quarter of an hour, and then shut up at once, or tumble in every other fence at which their riders may put them.'

Although our hero's Gentleman, with his hollow sides, dejected countenance, extended nostrils, and dirty face—for he had been twice down on his head, and only picked up by the superior strength of his rider—had not the aristocratic appearance which he had exhibited before the hounds found, when he certainly looked quite fit to carry a gentleman—and such he had on his back when he carried Frank Raby—still he had enough left in him to trot along with the hounds to Scraptoft, and see a second find. This gave him an opportunity of throwing his eyes over the hounds, which, it might be almost needless to say, he admired beyond any that he had hitherto seen, not only for their form, but their very businesslike appearance; and, as may be supposed, the fact of their having been bred by Mr. Meynell added not a little to their value in the eyes of so young a sportsman. Then the three *men*, having been Mr. Meynell's men, were equally pearls in his eyes. He could not, indeed, but admire the appearance of all three, for anything more characteristic could scarcely be exhibited in the human form. As for John Raven, he might have been shown as a pattern-card of his order. His keen and piercing eye, beaming from out a swarthy, but healthy skin, and strictly according in colour with his black and curly hair — raven locks we might call them—just visible under his cap; all this, added to his well-proportioned form, cast in the very mould for strong work, and of the right height for a horseman — and as such he was first-rate—at once pronounced him entitled to the character we have given of him. Neither were his two whippers-in foils to him. Joe Harrison (Jones, the cork-legged whipper-in, had then just retired, to the discomfiture of our hero, who wished to have seen the *rara avis*) was an excellent sample of his craft, as was also Tom Winkfield, with his one eye, and a countenance reminding one of a fox. They were both capital horsemen; indeed, I think I may say of Winkfield, from the long experience I had of his performance, that a better could not be found.

As this was one of the last days of Mr. Meynell appearing in the field, it was fortunate for Frank Raby that something occurred to call his attention to his proceedings, how trivial soever it might be. A small cover that lay on the road to Scraptoft was tried, but it did not hold a fox. One hound, however, threw his tongue once in the gorse, and no rate being heard, a *find* was considered certain.

'Have a care, Dromo,' however, was heard from Mr. Meynell, with one smack of his whip. It was no find; and on Lord Sefton approaching Mr. Meynell, he asked him if he knew the tongue of the hound that spoke in the gorse?

'It was Dromo,' said Meynell.

'I think not,' replied his Lordship; 'Dromo was on the other side of the cover, drawing very well.'

'It was either Dromo or Drummer' (brothers, and one-year hunters), resumed the veteran; but as Raven came by with the pack, the question was at once decided.

'What hound spoke to a scent, John?' said Lord Sefton. 'Dromo, my Lord,' replied Raven. 'I think a fox has been through the gorse early in the night.' This showed the accuracy of Mr. Meynell's ear, and at a period of life when such accuracy is not often exhibited.

It would not be worth while to recite the further doings of this day, and this on two accounts: first, the day altered, as we sportsmen say, and the pace could not be maintained; and secondly, if there had been a really good thing, our hero could not have partaken of it, forasmuch as *Gentleman* had not recovered the twister he had had in the morning. To say the truth, he was a very middling nag, and 'well known in Leicestershire' as such, or 150 guineas, or even double that sum, would not have purchased him at Tattersall's, for, like many other 'gentlemen,' his appearance was very imposing.

On his arrival at Melton, our hero was much disappointed at all he saw of the town as he rode to the 'Swan,' the head inn of those days, but now a private house; and likewise with the inn itself, which was as bad as bad could be. This, however, was a point of minor consequence to Frank Raby, inasmuch as by the introduction of Mr. Somerby, in addition to the weight his own connections gave to his name, he was seldom thrown on his own resources for a dinner; and on the very day of his arrival was a guest at the Old Club. And there was, in the proceedings of this club, what much took his fancy. There was a quiet, unaffected style in the dinner, although dressed by a good man-cook, as well as in the way in which the evening was passed, which he considered to be quite in character with sportsmen. After a moderate allowance of wine, tea and coffee were announced; and after an hour or two's amusement with cards, each man retired to his couch, to be ready and fresh for the following day.

And here the forthcoming day was productive of an event which could only have occurred in this 'metropolis of fox-hunting,' which Leicestershire is very properly called; but it was an event which our hero would never have forgotten, had he lived a thousand years. Having fallen asleep after his servant had called him, he found himself almost alone in Melton, that is, amongst the hunting men, all of them, with the exception of two—who, as luck would have it, were going to the same hounds as himself, those of the Earl of Lonsdale—having started on their road to cover. The names of these individuals he did not know at the time; but on seeing them pass the windows of his inn, he ordered out his cover-hack, followed them, at a respectful distance, along the London turnpike-road, which it was highly necessary he should have done, as he did not know his way to the cover, nor was there any one else to direct him. He had not, however, proceeded more than two miles along this road, before he saw his guides turn, at a right angle, through a bridle-gate, and of course he turned through it also. Three more bridle-gates were passed through at the extremities of fine grass grounds, over which these two crack horsemen, for such they were, went at a rate which rather surprised our young sportsman, conceiving them to be, like himself, riding their cover-hacks. No sooner through the fourth gate, however, than a different line of country presented itself. They left the bridle-road and made for a sheep-pen in a corner, which they passed, and then, leaping into and out of a lane, put their heads about as straight as the crow flies, in the direction of a spire which was in view. Our hero now began to find his mistake—nay, more, that he was in a scrape; for, although the hack he was mounted on could get over certain fences, at a certain pace, he began to find that, if he continued at the pace these Meltonians were leading him over this fine but choking country, he would soon be unable to leap at all. He had nothing to do, then, but to pull up, and endeavour to follow his guides, as Hercules did the oxen, by the tracks of their horses' feet on the ground.

All went well for the next five fields. The fences were practicable, and as the distance from Melton was only eight miles, our hero began to think that, from the pace they had been going, he might still arrive before the fox was found. But when in the middle of a very large field, and in the act of descending from the highest part of it, he saw what he suspected might prove to be death to all his hopes. He saw, and apparently for miles right and left, the valley he was about to descend into, not, in poetical language—

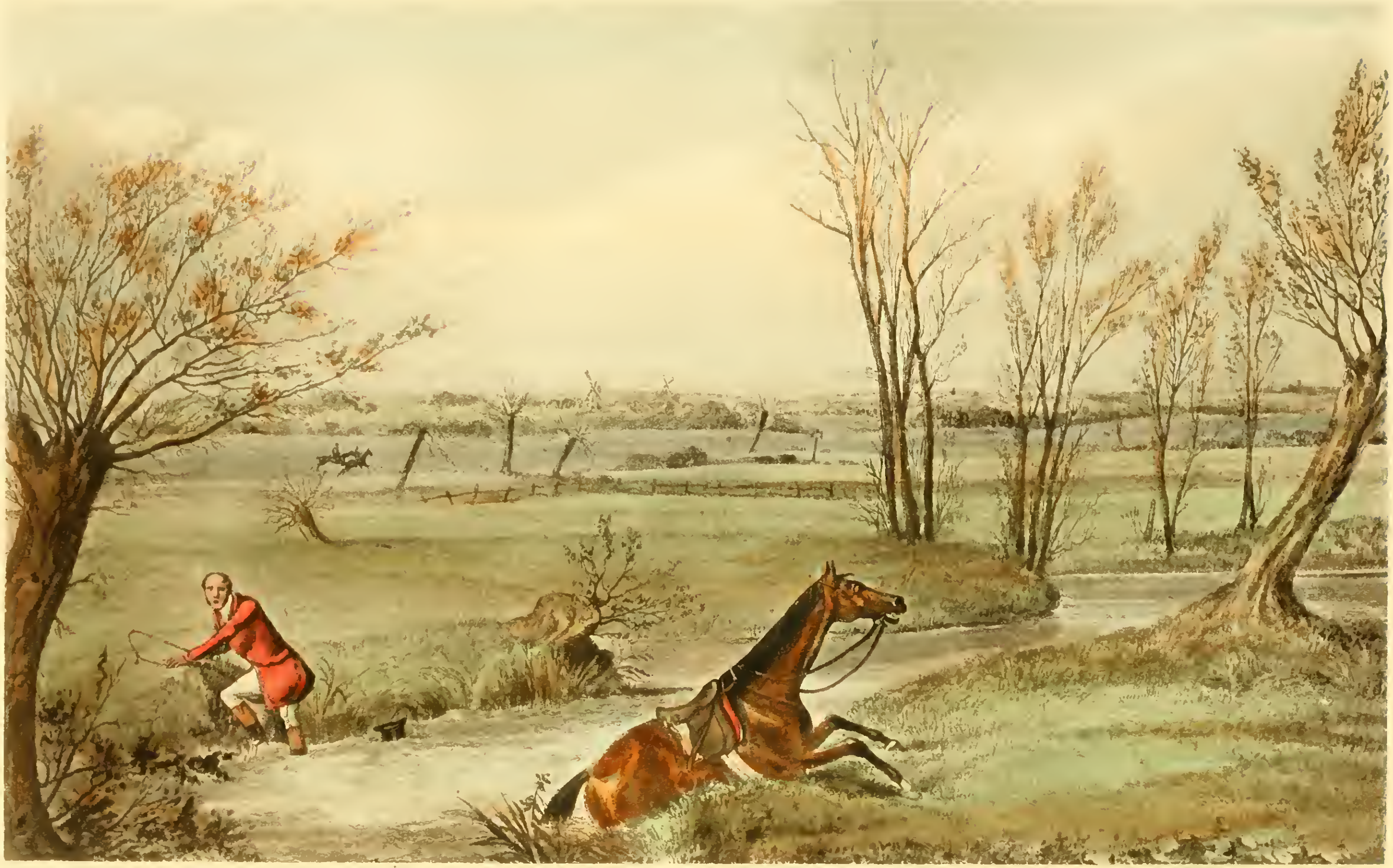
> 'With rural dainties crown'd,
> While opening blooms diffuse their sweets around,'

where nothing was to be heard but the hum of insects, the melody of birds, and the wild music of the shepherd's pipe, but he saw a long and undulating line of stumpy old pollarded willow-trees, which too plainly convinced him that a deep brook was in his line; and as for the hum of insects, the melody of birds, and the wild music of the shepherd's pipe, not a thing could he hear, animate or inanimate, beyond the puffing and blowing of his half-tired horse, and the sort of sucking noise his feet made as he pulled them out of the furrows of this highly ridged field.

'Now what is to be done?' was the question he put to himself,—and a serious question it was; for should he not be able to get to hounds, he greatly feared that many a good laugh would be had at his expense, even should he escape being shown up in a caricature as 'a young provincial gentleman going to cover in Leicestershire.' As to a bridge, or a ford, or a road, his eye looked for either in vain; and when he came down on the brook, and saw where his two guides had taken it in their stroke, he considered himself to be in the most trying situation in which a young sportsman, similarly circumstanced, could be placed. He recollected, however, that he had once ridden the horse he was then on, and which had been hunted by a young farmer with his father's harriers, over a brook nearly, if not quite, as wide as the one which now unfortunately arrested his progress: so he at once determined on riding at it. And he certainly gave him a fair chance; for it was not until he had turned his head to the wind, and thereby enabled him to recover his strength a little, that he put his intentions into execution. Taking him, then, about twenty yards from its banks, he put him manfully at the brook, which, as we say of the grave, only yawned to receive him. Whether it was that he wanted the excitement of the Amstead harriers, or whether the Melton cover-hack pace was quite beyond his mark, it is hard to determine, but this much is certain:—despite of the resolute manner in which he was ridden at it; namely, with two good digs of the spurs on starting, a refresher, when near the bank, by the whip, and a 'Come up' at rising, he only landed his fore legs on the bank, falling backwards into the water, with our hero underneath him, who might be said to have been anywhere but in clover at the time. The upshot, however, was that, having, after a lapse of nearly half an hour, got his horse on the bank again, he retraced his steps to Melton, on no very agreeable terms with himself, but with a full determination to know beforehand to whom he should in future look as pilots to direct his course over Leicestershire, for in this instance he had made a sad mistake.

He had got into the wake not only of two of the best men in the hunt, the afterwards great Tom Smith and Mr. Vansittart, but, as is often the case with Meltonians who possess large studs, they were not themselves on cover-hacks, but on first-rate hunters, whose pipes they were amusing themselves with opening, against their next day's work with hounds, instead of leaving that task to their servants, who, as they had known to their cost, could not perform it so well.

As might be expected, many inquiries were made respecting the absence of 'young Raby,' as he was called; for his having been introduced by Mr. Somerby, an influential character in the hunt, together with his name and connections, had rendered him an object of notice, even with the Melton men, an honour not very often conferred on persons of still greater pretensions. But they liked the looks of young Raby. There was something manly and sportsmanlike about him; in short, they considered him 'a promising young one,' a compliment first paid by Mr. Forester, no bad judge. To the questions put to our hero himself, he made the following candid answer: 'Why, I was very rightly served. I neglected the observance of what ought to be a standing rule in all situations in life, and in none more than in a sportsman's: namely, to "take time by the forelock," as the proverb has it, and even to allow for the chapter of accidents. The fact was, I was at my breakfast when I ought to have been on my hack, and I paid dearly for my folly by being soused over head and ears in



"Follow my leader."

a brook, besides losing, as I understand, a fine day's sport. However, the lesson will not be lost upon me, in having impressed two things upon my mind; first, to be wider awake on a hunting morning; secondly, the fact that a pretty good hunter with my father's harriers is a devilish bad cover-hack in Leicestershire.'

The next day being Sunday, Frank Raby, after being in church, for Melton men go to church, and hearing an excellent discourse from Doctor Ford, on the empty vanity of all human pursuits, was conducted by his friend Somerby through several of the stables belonging to the principal Melton men, which was to him a great treat. The impression made upon him by this inspection was conveyed to his friend, Sir John Inkleton, in a letter, of which the following is a copy:—

'Melton, February 3, 1802.

'DEAR INKLETON,—

'I promised to let you know how I get on in Leicestershire. I made a bad start on Friday with the Quorn:—attempted to go the pace with the leading men, and brought *Gentleman* to a standstill. I think his place is "the provincials," as the top-sawyers here call all countries but their own. However, I was much pleased with their beautiful riding, and went as long as I could. But, to use the vulgar phrase, I must either eat more pudding,—that is, become older,—or buy better horses, before I shall be able to go their pace, for it is nearly the Bibury Welter pace. And yet I have no reason to be displeased with my first day in Leicestershire. Somerby introduced me to several of the dons, and, above all, to Mr. Meynell, who equals all I have heard of him in his manners and appearance. Lord Sefton does the whole thing in first-rate style; his huntsman, Raven (I have not seen Stephen Goodall), is worth riding fifty miles to see. Every one says he is perfect in the field, and has, what can be said of few, only one fault elsewhere. He is rather too fond of his Lordship's good October. The meet at Cream Lodge Gorse was such a sight as I never thought I should see—but more of this when we meet.

'Yesterday I made a very "bad cast," as old Dick says. I missed seeing a fine run with Lord Lonsdale's hounds by oversleeping myself, and got well punished for so doing. When I ought to have been half-way to cover, I was at my breakfast, and by endeavouring to follow the two last men out of Melton, but generally two of the first in a run, on their cover-hacks, as I imagined, I got over head in a brook, and was obliged to return without seeing a hound. They proved to be Mr. Assheton Smith, called here, *par excellence* no doubt, Tom Smith, and Mr. Vansittart, both mounted upon hunters.

'I was much disappointed with Melton—I mean the town, which is a poor place, but it contains many good fellows. I dined at the Old Club the first day, the members of which appear to live together after the manner of brothers, and just as sportsman ought to live; no midnight revelling to shake the nerves. In fact, I am told a pint of wine is the usual limit with many of the best men at Melton.

'To-day I went to church, a beautiful specimen of the florid Gothic, with very pretty chimes, and was amused as well as edified by the rector, Dr. Ford. When I say "amused," I must tell you why. He would not suffer the clerk to murder the second and fourth verses of the psalm of the day, but read them himself, evidently partaking of the poetical inspiration of the author of them. It is really abominable to hear our clerk at Amstead murder and miscall this fine language,—"the howl in the dessart," for example. But enough of this. After church I walked through several stables in the town, and saw, as you may suppose, many fine horses. To carry my weight, Mr. Forester's stud pleased me most. They were chiefly brown geldings, that colour being prevalent in Shropshire (where he generally purchases his hunters), with those got by the Hundred House Snap, his favourite blood. Cholmondeley's horses were very perfect, and just suited to his weight. By the way, I remember a Christchurch man, out of his county, saying that whilst he was staying at his seat in Cheshire, thirteen hunters took their departure for Melton; and on his observing that "it must be a difficult matter to find such a lot":—"Not at all," replied Cholmondeley, "the difficulty is in finding the money to pay for them."

'Further particulars of what I saw to-day must remain till we meet. I shall only add that, although the general condition of the hunters here is very good, it does not equal that of Lord Sefton's stud; and I have told Pritchard—who of course growled on hearing it—that no hunter of mine should ever again have a summer's run at grass.

'Believe me, dear Inkleton,
'Truly yours,
'Francis Raby.

'*P.S.*—I hope your stable continues right, and that you will come here soon. Depend upon it, it is the place for sport. In fact, one of the flyers here says—not that I agree with him—"riding to cover over this country is better than riding to hounds over most others."

'F. R.'

The next appearance of our young sportsman with hounds, was with those of the Duke of Rutland at one of their most favourite fixtures, and where, as is usual in such cases, most of the leading characters of the three adjoining hunts met together. The scene, like that at Cream Lodge, was one of the most cheering and soul-stirring description to a person of his age and experience, and tended to enhance greatly his opinion of Melton as a domicile for a hunting man. Then there was a character at the head of his Grace's hunting establishment who was an object of much interest, and especially so with young sportsmen, inasmuch as he was, at that period, what may be called the only one in his calling with anything like equal pretensions; namely, to unite the gentleman with the huntsman, combining the duties of the servant withal. This was the far-famed Shaw, who then hunted the Duke of Rutland's hounds, and who, for what may be called 'style' in every department and movement of his calling, was the most celebrated huntsman of the day. All this, indeed, was visible to Frank Raby previously to the hounds throwing off; for, instead of seeing him, where he looked for him, in the middle of his pack, as they stood under the shelter of a fence, awaiting the appointed hour, he observed him coming along on his cover-hack, at the rate of fifteen miles in the hour, and in company with two distinguished sportsmen, then on a visit to the Duke, and who were, no doubt, enjoying, as well as profiting by, the sage and pertinent remarks of a man so eminent in his way, which, although delivered with the authority of a master, were given with the respect expected from a servant. Nor was this all: he was amused with his proceedings on his arrival. After the usual exchange of greetings between himself and his hounds, which no man who has a soul, or is capable of being pleased with such simple exhibitions of nature, can witness without pleasure, there was something quite aristocratic in the manner in which he prepared himself for entering upon his office, and commencing the operations of the day. The mud-boots being taken off, and the dust, should there have been any, wiped off his neat and well-polished boots, a white cambric handkerchief was generally taken from his pocket by Shaw, with which, after gently raising his cap from his head, he as gently wiped his brow, returning it to whence it came. Then there was something remarkable too—something pleasing to the ear, in the tone of Shaw's voice, and especially so when uttering the words—'*your Grace*,' which, of course, were invariably appended to his answers to his noble master. Again, there was an air about him even in mounting his hunter, and trotting away with the hounds towards the cover, at the signal given to him by the Duke, which forcibly struck Frank Raby as something out of the common way. The signal was silently but gracefully acknowledged by a gentle raising of the cap, and he may be said to have thrown his hounds into cover with much grace. As for his horsemanship, it was elegant, and so thought our hero.

But our hero's opinion of the hounds shall appear in a letter he wrote to his friend Lord Dauntley, after hunting with Lord Lonsdale's hounds on the following day, and once more with Lord Sefton's.

'Melton, February 6, 1802.

'Dear Dauntley,—

'As we shall meet so soon, I shall only now tell you that I have been out with the three packs, and am delighted with all I have seen. I could not have believed, had I not witnessed it, that any part of England could be so favourable, both for hounds and those who ride to them, as that which I have lately travelled over. And at what a pace it is travelled over! But you know all this better than I can tell you. I can only say, it is too fast for me, at least, for my horses. I stopped Gentleman, the first day with the Quorn, in little more than twenty minutes; Achilles is too slow; ditto Pantaloon;[1] in fact, the General, and Bowman[2]—a right good one—are the only two at all fit for the country. My stable will soon be stumped up, and I must either return to the provincials, or purchase others. It is useless to be here with only six horses, and four of those not up to the mark. I overheard one of the fellows yesterday say—"I think that young Raby would ride if he had the cattle, but the present lot won't do. They tell me he'll be well breeched one of these days, so it's his own fault

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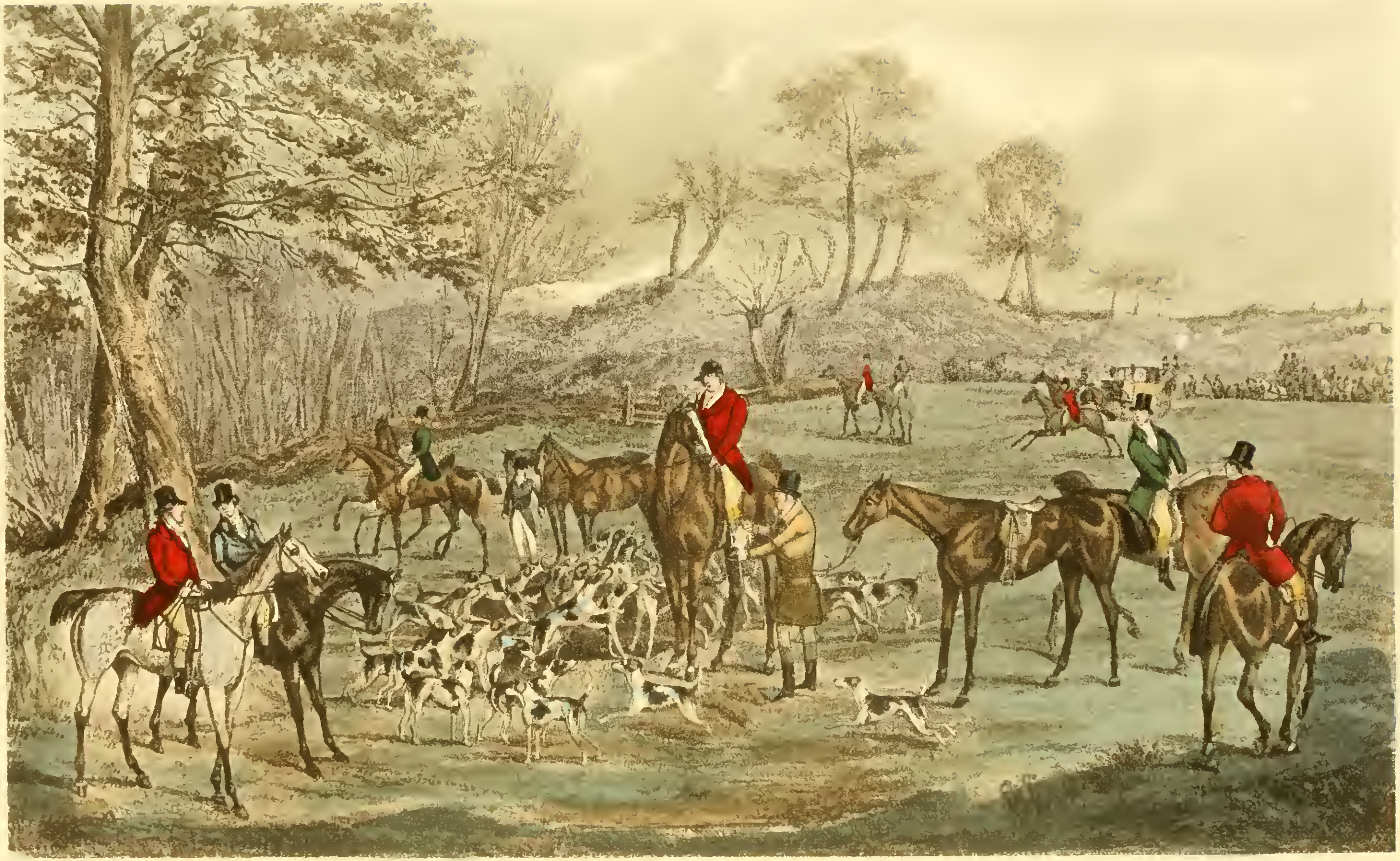
[1] The horse purchased at Tattersall's, together with Gentleman.

[2] The horse purchased at the recommendation of Sir John Inkleton, and already spoken of.



A meet with His Grace the Duke of Rutland.

if he don't mend his stable." I think so, too, Dauntley; and I must go to *Moses* before next hunting season—that is to say, if *Mr. Darkin* don't win the Oaks. Trueman gives me hopes in his last letter; he says "*Rouge* is one of the best goers of a young one he ever saw." As he is so good a judge, I think something of this. He says nothing of Euphrosyne; but if one of them can do the trick it's enough.

'Now for my opinion of what I have seen. I like the Melton fellows much—"no nonsense about them," as Jack Bailey says; and they are very civil—indeed, kind to me! Of the hounds I should say this:—The Quorn and Lord Lonsdale's are the most businesslike, but the Duke's are, perhaps, the handsomest to the eye. They certainly show much blood, as we say of horses. The others are coarser in some of their points; for example, a hound in the Quorn called Guzman, which Raven told me they breed much from, is coarse in his fore-quarters, with what old Dick calls "a chitterling shirt about his neck." I believe the term is, "a little throating." But they all have good legs, and feet, and loins, at least as far as I am a judge. The Duke's, with a good scent, are called the fastest; indeed, one day last week they ran clean away from the horses, in a burst of twelve minutes—only one thorough-bred one being able to live with them. Shaw confessed he was beat half a mile in four, and over the finest part of the country for a splitter. Lord Lonsdale's are capital hunters, and, I believe, seldom lose a fox, unless by accident, when the scent serves. The country I met them in looked very much like fox-hunting. The fixture was Tilton Wood. Yesterday, I met the Quorn again; it was the pack hunted by Stephen Goodall, a most intelligent-looking fellow, but a cruel weight for a horse. He is said to be very clever, and if up with his hounds in time, generally puts them right, when at fault. We had a capital run, and I am happy to say I was capitally carried by Bowman. I suppose I could put him into my pocket at a large sum, if I was so disposed, as Pritchard tells me no less than three of his brothers of the stable have asked him whether he was for sale? There was some desperate riding yesterday; and I understand the part of the Stanton Brook which Forester leaped on a horse called Bernado, measured thirty-two feet—a great leap for a horse, with better than fourteen stone on his back.

'Now, then, adieu till we meet. If you chance to see the fillies, let me have your opinion of their condition, etc.; and, should you hear of a good *well-bred* hunter for sale, think of me. I will go as far as 300 guineas.

'Dear Dauntley,
'Ever yours,
'FRANCIS RABY.

'The Lord Dauntley, etc. etc.

'*P.S.*—I had nearly forgotten to tell you, that I was much pleased with the appearance of the celebrated Mr. Brummell in the field. He is not a sportsman, I believe, nor much of a rider; but he is one of the neatest and best dressed men I ever saw. His horses, also, are complete both in shape and condition, and everything about him—the *tout ensemble*, I think they call it on the other side of the channel—may be said to be complete.'

The ides of March were not more dreaded by the great Cæsar himself, than they are by a fox-hunter in the ploughed countries, as half a dozen 'fine March days,' as the farmers say of them, put a stop to anything like sport with hounds. This being the case in that district in which Sir John Inkleton hunted, he most liberally made an offer of his four capital hunters to his young friend, Frank Raby, and they arrived at Melton in tip-top condition, just one month previous to the conclusion of the season. Here, then, was the character of our hero at once brought forth, and *stamped*. In some of their best runs—which are not denied to hounds in the grass countries, even to the middle of April—he particularly distinguished himself; and it was the general opinion of the best judges amongst the Meltonians and the members of the other hunts, that Frank Raby, as he was now everywhere called, would one day or another rank in the foremost class, not only of horsemen, but of sportsmen—verifying the prophetic verdict of Mr. Forester, that he was 'a very promising young one.'

CHAPTER XII

A sample of a young sportsman's life in London—A near thing for the Oaks at Epsom, and a close shave for the Oaks at Amstead.

THE season concluded, our hero took his departure from Melton, but not without having hired most convenient apartments for the forthcoming one, together with a ten-stalled stable for his horses, being resolved on adding four others to his number, as well as replacing those who could not do the trick. In fact, he was now spoiled for riding anything second-rate, and Bowman and the General were the only two that he intended to keep for the ensuing year.

Between his arrival at Amstead, and 'the Derby,' a period of as much note in the almanack of a sportsman as Whitsuntide or Easter in that of others, nothing occurred to our hero sufficiently worthy of record, unless it be the receipt of the two following letters at about the end of the first fortnight:—

'Grosvenor Square, Sunday, April 19.

'DEAR RABY,—

'Your account of your doings at Melton delighted me, but not so much as that I have heard from others of your performance over the country, and the good impression you left behind you on the people. They all say "you will do," and enough is expressed in those few words. I saw your fillies a few days back, and I really think you have a chance. Trueman says he has tried them high (such are his words), and that Rouge is the second best two-year-old he ever had in his stable. I am just come from Tattersall's, and find they are both in the betting; Rouge at only 12 to 1—Euphrosyne at 25. You should employ some one to lay out a hundred for you, chiefly on Rouge, from what Trueman says. He has taken the odds himself to £50. Make use of me, if you like, as I mean to lay out some money on Rouge—a hundred at least—to-morrow. As they tell me the may-fly is gone, I suppose we shall soon meet in the little village. I shall therefore only add that I remain,

'Dear Frank, truly yours,

'DAUNTLEY.

'F. Raby, Esq.'

'HONOURED SIR,—

'I writes to tell you how your fillies is, as it is my duty so to do. I thinks we shall be nigh hand with Rouge, if we doesn't win the Oaks. I have tried her with a good four-year-old at eight pounds, and they ran head to head. Euphrosyne is well, and has good speed, but I doubt she will not stay.[1] I have taken the odds (12 to 1) to £50 about Rouge, and I would advise you to do the same, but don't meddle with the other yet. The odds will be higher against her after a bit, when people sees she hasn't many friends.

'Sir, your obedient servant,

'W. TRUEMAN.

'To Francis Raby, Esq.'

The consequence of these letters was, one from our hero to his friend Dauntley, requesting him to take the odds to a hundred pounds on Rouge, but, in the classical language of Mr. Trueman, not to meddle with Euphrosyne, and the commission was executed, on the following Monday, by his Lordship.

A fortnight before the Derby our hero arrived in London, and, as usual, took up his residence with his uncle, whose kindness towards him was unabated. He could not, however, help remarking that, although, from the length of time since he had last seen him, it was, to a certain extent, to be looked for, there was a wide difference in the character and deportment of his favourite nephew, and in one or two respects not exactly to be accounted for. In the first place, he was rather short in his answers; in other words, if he did not appear to hold his uncle cheaply, he appeared evidently to attach but little weight to his general remarks and opinions. The fact was, his uncle had never been at Melton. In the next, he observed a thoughtfulness about him that was not, he was certain, natural, and he now and then appeared to be almost absorbed in thought. In fact, Mr. Beaumont Raby began to doubt whether his favourite nephew was happy, and even put the question to him, to endeavour to satisfy his mind on the subject. The answer was, of course, in the affirmative.

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[1] *Anglicè*—is a jade and will die away in a struggle at the last.

That Frank Raby was, at this time, quite happy, no one will readily believe, and the cause of his not being so will as readily present itself. He had embarked in a speculation, the result of which was not only in itself uncertain, but it was also apparent to him that he had embarked in it rashly, and without the means of carrying it through with any satisfaction to himself. He had already put himself under an obligation to a friend, and that a newly-acquired one, for the money his fillies had cost, and he was further involved with him in the odds he had taken for him at Tattersall's. In short, for the first time in his life, he found himself in trouble, in consequence of exceeding his means. But this was not the utmost extent of it. He had subjected himself, also for the first time, to a severe self-reproach, for acting an underhand part in the possession of his racing fillies—in fact, for having done what he feared to be known to all the world, which he felt was quite repugnant to his naturally ingenuous disposition.

Within a week of the meeting, matters stood thus: Rouge was third favourite for the Oaks, the odds being only 8 to 1 against her, whereas, with respect to Euphrosyne, they remained at 25. Nevertheless, in consequence of her being in the same stable with Rouge, said to be such a flyer, added to her being known to be a superior goer, a good deal of money had been laid out on her at the above-named quotation, but not by the principal bettors, further than to make up their books. As to her owner, although he had taken the odds—at least his noble friend had done so for him—to another hundred pounds, on the Monday before the race, when they were only 12 to 1, he had not one shilling on Euphrosyne, nor had any of his friends who were in the secret, and they only consisted of three: namely, Lord Dauntley, Hargrave, and Goodall, his old Christchurch chums, who had laid out some money on Rouge.

On the morning of the race, an alteration had taken place in the betting, in consequence of something having transpired, and the odds stood thus: 12 to 1 against Rouge, and 10 to 1 against Euphrosyne, or 6 to 1 against Mr. Darkin's lot. Thus had Rouge gone down four points, whilst Euphrosyne got up fifteen in the betting.

But one thing surprised Frank Raby and his friends more than the alteration in the betting; and this was the fact of the worst jockey being put upon Rouge, and the best on the other filly, which was thus accounted for by Mr. Trueman:—

'We must not throw away a chance, sir,' said he to our hero, 'with Euphrosyne, although hers is a poor one; she is a difficult mare to ride, whereas Rouge wants no riding at all, beyond keeping her straight and holding her well together. She's as honest as, I fear, the other is a rogue.'

All this, however, was very satisfactorily explained about an hour before the race, and in the following manner:—

Our hero was accosted on the course by a person of rather mean appearance, but having a good deal the look and character of what is called a 'leg,' in the real acceptation of that term.

'Pray, sir,' said he, 'are you not Mr. Raby?'

'I am,' he replied.

'And the owner of two fillies in this race?'

Our hero paused, but his silence was thus interrupted by the 'leg':—

'I know all about them, sir,' resumed he: 'they are both your fillies, and you have been *robbed*! I saw them tried, and I have no doubt but that Euphrosyne is five pounds a better mare than Rouge. As for myself, I stand to win upon her, and have laid long odds against the other, which, in my opinion, is as big a jade as ever started in a race.'

'And pray who are you?' asked our hero.

'No matter who I am, sir,' was the reply; 'you'll find I have told you the truth.'

'Here is a pretty business,' said Raby, as he galloped up to Goodall, whom he chanced to espy on the course: 'for God's sake, where is Dauntley?'

'What do you want with him in such a hurry?' asked Goodall.

'To hedge our money before the ring breaks up,' was the reply; 'I have reason to believe we are all *done* about Rouge, who has not a chance to win, and the other filly has.'

The upshot, however, was this:—Lord Dauntley could not be found; neither our hero nor Goodall had any credit in the ring, which, in an hour from that time, was broken up; and to the post went the fillies. The race was one of the quickest ever seen over that course. Euphrosyne answering every stroke of the whip and every dig of the spur—struggling, in short, to the very last stride—was only beaten by a head, whereas the *favourite* was at the extremity of the tail, or, as his owner said of Eclipse's competitors, '*nowhere*.' And the summing up of the case was this:—Mr. Trueman won £300 by backing Rouge to lose, the money being laid out for him by a friend; and if Euphrosyne had won the race, he would have pocketed £3000 on the event—in fact, to use his own words, let drop when very drunk, *he should from that hour have been a gentleman.* But it now matters little: Mr. Trueman went to his account without having been created a gentleman, by breaking his neck down stairs, when in a state of beastly intoxication; and our hero purchased a lesson at no very great cost.

Now, independently of the loss of the stakes, and the honour of being a winner of the Oaks—an honour which, nevertheless, must in this case have lain dormant for a time—there was one very provoking circumstance to Frank Raby, in this foul transaction. He could have sold Rouge for 1000 guineas, on the strength of her place in the betting, whereas she was now worth little more than as many half-crowns—in fact, she was soon afterwards sold at about that figure. Euphrosyne, however, was valuable, and might have been sold for a very considerable sum. To get rid of the thing altogether, however, and to prevent the necessity of his applying to a friend to enable him to pay the debts Lord Dauntley had made for him at Tattersall's, and to discharge Mr. Trueman's bill, he accepted an offer made to him, through Trueman, of 800 guineas for her, which, with no great addition from his own present resources, enabled him to discharge all obligations—that to his friend Dauntley, for the original purchase of the fillies, amongst the number. And there was one redeeming quality in Mr. Trueman, the trainer: he left the world without betraying the secret as to whom these fillies belonged; and as our hero had not made any admission to the 'leg,' who made the disclosure of the villainy, it never came to light until he revealed it himself, at a period when it mattered nothing if all the world knew it.

Horace says, 'Life is short, and we should gather its roses while Fate leaves them in our power'; and he also says (mistakenly, I think), that 'the charm of Fame consists in being pointed at, and having it said, *This is he!*' Now, I do not think that our hero was under the ban of the last-named infirmity; but that he was bent upon gathering the roses before the bloom began to fade, his late proceedings have pretty clearly demonstrated. As his friend Dauntley and himself, then, were taking a ride together in the park, on the Thursday after the Epsom meeting, the following conversation took place:—

'I may consider myself very fortunate,' said Frank Raby, 'in getting out of my racing speculation so well as I have done; and shall be very cautious how I enter into another. But I have a serious undertaking on my hands, which must be accomplished in the course of the summer.'

'What is that?' said Lord Dauntley.

'I must lay out upwards of £1000 in horseflesh, and I am at present uncertain whence that sum will be forthcoming.'

'My good fellow,' said his Lordship, 'you need be so no longer. I have that sum at your service any day you may call upon me for it. Nothing is more grateful to me than the act of serving a friend; indeed, I consider that we are sent here, among other wise purposes, to serve each other when it lies in our power.'

'A thousand thanks, my dear Dauntley,' replied Raby; 'but I must not trespass further on the kindness of my friends, so long as I have other sources to fly to for relief. Goodall tells me he can recommend me to a respectable man in the city, who will advance me a couple of thousand pounds on a post-obit security, and on fair terms. I am to be introduced to him to-morrow.'

'Needs must, when the devil drives,' resumed Lord Dauntley; 'but, as your father cannot be fifty, you will have to pay a heavy bonus.'

'Yes, but there is my uncle, also,' replied our hero. 'Goodall says the contingency may be made to embrace my expectations from him.'

'I doubt it,' said his Lordship. 'However, if you do not succeed in the city, you know where to come; at all events, do not conclude the bargain without informing me of the nature of it.'

At the appointed hour Goodall met our hero at Limmer's, and getting into a dirty hackney coach, proceeded to the city on an equally dirty business, and in due time arrived at the residence of Mr. Sharpe, a member of the honourable profession of money-scriveners. On their names being announced to him, they were shown into the dining-room, where Mr. Sharpe almost immediately made his appearance, that part of his premises, as he himself said, being better fitted than the 'office' for gentlemen who came to him 'on matters of a delicate nature.' He was a middle-aged man, respectable in his appearance, possessing a quick eye, and altogether a very intelligent countenance. We will once more have recourse to the dialogical form, in describing this interview.

'Good morning to ye, gentlemen,' said Mr. Sharpe (on making his appearance): 'Mr. Goodall, I believe.'

'The same, sir,' replied Goodall.

'Then I presume,' continued Mr. Sharpe, 'this gentleman (bowing to our hero) is Mr. Raby. I beg, gentlemen, you will be seated.'

'My friend Mr. Raby, sir,' said Goodall, 'is in want of some temporary assistance, and having been recommended to you by my friend Mr. Thornton, I have reason to believe you will render it to him upon fair and honourable terms.'

'Sir,' said Mr. Sharpe, smirking a bow, 'you pay me a compliment: but this I may say of myself, that, from my very extensive pecuniary connections in this great town, I have the means of rendering gentlemen accommodation to an extent not within the reach of—I think I may say—any other man. But pray, sir, let me ask you, is your friend a son of Mr. Raby, of Amstead Abbey?'

'He is,' replied Goodall.

'Then,' resumed Mr. Sharpe, 'there will be no difficulty in this case. I foreclosed a mortgage last year, on a property adjoining the Amstead estate, and, having been some weeks in the neighbourhood, know all about Mr. Raby. I think, sir,' continued he, addressing himself to our hero, 'you are now the only son.'

'I am,' replied Frank; and, as he spoke, a deep flush came over his face, at the same time that he stifled a sigh, and avoided catching the eye of his friend Goodall.

'Very well, sir; now what is the sum you are in want of?'

'Two thousand pounds.'

'Oh, sir,' quoth Mr. Sharpe, ''tis hardly worth while going to parchment for such a sum as that; suppose we say five?'

'No,' replied Frank Raby; 'I only want £2000 at present.'

'And the security?'

'A post-obit.'

Mr. Sharpe first squeezed together his lips, hard enough to have cracked a hazel-nut, and then, pouting them out on a level with the end of his nose, looked exceedingly wise—'Post-obit! Difficult to get money on post-obit—that is to say, on fair and easy terms; would not annuity be better?'

'No,' returned Frank, 'annuity won't do; I have only an allowance from my father.'

'Well, sir, then we'll say no more on that subject. You propose a bonus on the death of your father?'

'Yes, or my uncle.'

'Oh! you have an uncle?'

'I have; and as he has never been married, and is nearly as old as my father, I have reason to *believe* I shall inherit his property.'

'Ah, sir,' said Mr. Sharpe, with a sigh, 'two or three young gentlemen I have had to deal with, have *believed* the same thing of their uncles, but found their mistake when they died. Old uncles are ticklish fellows to deal with; if you please, we will confine ourselves to your father, whose estates I know are entailed on you. Have you ever borrowed money before?'

'Never; unless it was a hundred or so, from a friend, which I repaid.'

'Good, sir; and what do you expect to be the bonus upon the sum you propose to raise?'

'Let us hear what *you* have to say, Mr. Sharpe.'

'Why, let me see,' said Mr. Sharpe (placing his hand over his eyes, and resting his elbow on the table):—'your father, sir, you say, is fifty-two years old; he may live another fifty-two years. Then (removing his hands from his eyes, and looking at our hero) your father, sir, is, I understand, a very regular liver, entering but little into the dissipation of this town; on the contrary, I believe he almost altogether lives in the country, devoting himself to hunting, agriculture, and such-like health-giving pursuits. Then, what a fine, noble-looking man he is! I think, Mr. Raby, he'll hold for a long tug.'

'I hope he may,' replied Frank; 'but tell me at once what you expect for £2000?'

'Certainly not less than £5000, all circumstances considered.'

'Then be it so; when can I have the money?"

'In a fortnight from this day; you shall hear from me within that time, to appoint the day and hour in which the money will be forthcoming. All, then, that I have to add is, a request that Mr. Thornton may be an attesting witness to the bond, or, indeed, any other gentleman who is known to both parties, merely to identify the person of Mr. Raby, who is, of course, a stranger to me.'

'Why, to be sure, we are both strangers to you, Mr. Sharpe,' said Goodall; 'but there can be no objection to call upon my friend Thornton, on whom I can depend for not talking about this affair, which, of course, Mr. Raby wishes to be kept a secret.'

'Oh, sir,' said Mr. Sharpe, with a small smile, '*we* never talk of these matters; we should be cutting our own throats.' And so *exeunt omnes*.

'Well, Raby,' said Lord Dauntley to our hero, the first time they met after this visit to Mr. Sharpe, 'how did you get on with the money-lender? What are you to give for your £2000?'

'What do you think?' was the reply.

'I am no judge of such things,' answered his Lordship, 'as my father died when I was two years old. All I know is, you must mind what you are at; for a friend of mine was nicely humbugged by one of these advertising money-lenders. He was absolutely obliged to take *twelve dozen gross* of cotton stockings, and a lot of vulgar plate, which he did not want, for more than half the sum promised him.'

'There is no fear of my being served in that way,' replied Raby; 'Mr. Sharpe seems to be a respectable man; has a devilish good house; and keeps lots of clerks. I am to give £5000 for £2000, cash down.'

'Well,' resumed his noble friend, 'all things considered, for your father is a young and very hale man, I do not think that is much out of the way, for there is no small risk in post-obit bonds. You know the law takes no cognisance of the *bonus*—that is, the lender can only recover the principal and legal interest for the same.'

'Indeed!' exclaimed our hero, somewhat surprised at the assertion. 'Still, no man, with the feelings of a gentleman, would refuse to pay the bonus.'

'Certainly not,' replied Lord Dauntley, 'if he were fairly dealt with in the transaction, and no further advantage taken than that to which he himself had been a party.'

At the end of a fortnight from the visit of our hero, with Goodall, to the city, he received the following note from Mr. Sharpe:—

'Mr. Sharpe presents his respectful compliments to Mr. Raby, and begs to inform him that everything is arranged relating to the post-obit transaction; and will thank Mr. Raby to give him the meeting on Thursday next, at two o'clock precisely, at No. 13 Edward Street, Portman Square, where the gentleman who makes the advance resides.'

As may be imagined, our hero was true to his time, and having been introduced to Mr. Thornton, who acceded to Mr. Sharpe's request, made his appearance in Edward Street, just as the clock struck two, expecting to find the lawyer, if not Mr. Thornton, there before him.

It happened, however, that he was the first; and on inquiring whether Mr. Longbottom was at home, was answered by a smart livery-servant in the affirmative, and to whom he presented his card.

'Walk this way, if you please, sir,' said John: and he conducted him to the front drawing-room, which was not only elegantly furnished, but had its walls absolutely covered with large and apparently well-executed paintings.

'This man must be a man of fortune,' said our hero to himself, as he threw his eyes round the room; 'I think I am in good hands.'

In a very few minutes the door of the room was opened, and a tall, thin, unhealthy-looking person in black, with a well-powdered head, walked in, with our hero's card in his hand, and was, of course, very polite to his guest.

'You are punctual, Mr. Raby,' said he; 'I like to have to do with persons who are punctual.'

'But where is Mr. Sharpe?' inquired Frank.

'Why, I think he will soon be here, accompanied by a gentleman whose name and object you have been acquainted with,' resumed Mr. Longbottom. 'But you know, sir, lawyers like Mr. Sharpe, in a large way, cannot always command their own time. Pray, Mr. Raby, be seated.'

'Thank ye,' replied Frank Raby; 'but I wish to have another look at your pictures. I admire *this*, much,' pointing to an historical piece of very large dimensions.

'That is a *chef d'œuvre*,' said his host; 'I gave 3000 guineas for that picture in Rome.'

'And *this*,' resumed our hero.

'A Correggio,' said Longbottom.

'And *this*, how beautiful!'

'You show your taste, Mr. Raby; that picture is *yours*.'

'Mine!!!'

'Yes, yours; that is to say, merely nominally so. General Jervis, now at the Bedford Hotel, in Covent Garden, is to give you 700 guineas; and a gentleman of the name of Crow will also give you 300 for that exquisite "Holy Family," by Le Brun, which will just make up 1000 guineas of the money.'

On hearing this our hero smelt a rat; and, taking out his watch, thus addressed Mr. Longbottom:—

'By the way, Mr. Longbottom, I want to leave my card on a friend who lives in the square, and by the time I return, no doubt Mr. Sharpe and Mr. Thornton will be here. So good morning for the present.'

The bell was rung; the door opened by the footman; and exit Frank Raby, with these words in his mouth:—

'If old Sharpe's head never aches till I meet him at this fellow's house, he will have a good time of it.'

But what was to be done with Mr. Thornton, whom our hero could not think of thus leaving in the lurch? Luckily for both parties, he saw him at the other end of the street, and told him what had passed about the pictures.

'They attempted to do me in the same way,' said Mr. Thornton,' 'and, as it was, I was obliged to take £300 worth of plate which I did not want; but they are unreasonable in your case.'

'Well,' said Frank Raby, 'I am very sorry you have been brought here on a fool's errand, but I will instantly write a note to Sharpe, and tell him to let matters rest till he hears from me again; and I will send it to him at Longbottom's.' Mr. Thornton approved of his discretion, and here the matter ended for the present.

The next day Frank Raby called on Lord Dauntley, to inform him of the result of his visit to Edward Street, and at the conclusion of his story was thus addressed by his truly noble friend:—

'My dear Raby, have nothing more to do in this business. As I told you before, I can furnish you with the £2000 without the least inconvenience, and require no other security than a common bond. I would advise you to get Mr. Thornton to make your peace with Mr. Sharpe, by paying him his costs in preparing the bond, which cannot be much, as the value of stamps to unexecuted deeds is not enforced. As to Mr. *Longbottom*, with his *chef d'œuvre*, leave him to his fate; he will, however, be aware that you are too *long-headed* for him. Who Mr. Crow is, I know not; but General Jervis I do happen to know, and am quite sure that, so far from his being at the Bedford Hotel, in this town, and able to give 700 guineas for a picture, he is at this moment playing at hide-and-seek with the bailiffs, and cannot command 700 shillings.'

'My dear Dauntley,' replied our hero, 'you are too kind; if compelled to do so, I will accept your offer, but I still have one more move. There is a rich old miller on the Amstead estate, who, I have reason to believe, will lend me this money, on a common bond, with an insurance on my life, which I should be willing to make, by way of rendering the security "undeniable," as the lawyers say. I will write to him this evening.'—And so he did, to the following purport:—

'Limmer's Hotel, Bond Street, June 4th, 1804.

'MR. GRIMES,—

'I want to borrow £2000 on my bond, for which I will pay the legal interest, and make an insurance on my life, if you think it necessary, for the principal. If you can so far oblige me, *do it quickly*, as I want to purchase some hunters against next season. At all events, say nothing about this application to any one—of all persons in the world, not to *Robson*. I can have the bond prepared here, which will be better than employing a country attorney.

'In haste, yours, etc.,
'FRANCIS RABY.

'To Mr. Grimes.'

An answer to this effect was returned by the first post:—

'Ashton Mills, June 7th, 1804.

'HON. SIR,—

'I am sorry to hear you want such a large sum as £2000. Sure you been't agoing to lay it out *all in horses*, for you have the finest in the country now, by odds. Howsomever, you shall have the money by this day month, on the conditions you propose; and on receiving the papers, it shall be paid through my salesman, in London, so that nobody will know nothing about it. I am glad to oblige you, sir, and don't doubt but you'll be kind to the lads when I am gone. No more at present from, hon. sir,

'Your dutiful servant,
'JOHN GRIMES.

'*P.S.*—As I loves you, Mr. Francis, as the apple of my eye, don't be offended at my saying I hopes you won't get into no mischief among the gambling gentlemen in London. They tells me they are too sharp for us country people.'

How is it, it may be asked, that we have heard nothing of Sir John Inkleton, the friend and patron of our hero, in the late memorable transactions? How is it, indeed, that he was not allowed to be privy to them? The answer is—it was too near home for the grand secret of the racing fillies, as also the transactions with Mr. Sharpe, to be divulged in that quarter. Sir John, in spite of now and then a hint from Lady Charlotte, that he had 'spoiled Francis for a younger brother,' was a great favourite at the Abbey, and, although considerably his junior, much in the confidence of Mr. Raby. Nor is this the extent of the reason why he was kept in the dark. Our hero knew that this outbreak of his, so far from being approved of, would have been discouraged by Sir John, who, as has been shown, indulged himself in various pursuits, which were congenial to his taste, and one of them of an expensive nature—I allude, of course, to his propensity to the coach-box—still he was so far prudent as to regulate his disbursements according to his income; in other words, he had hitherto lived within his means. Nevertheless, had his young friend told him that he wanted a few hundred pounds to purchase hunters with, his purse would have been liberally opened to him for the purpose; forasmuch as having, in some measure, looked upon himself as his preceptor in matters relating to the field, and written letters in praise of him to his friends at Melton, he was anxious he should establish his character in that country as a first-rate horseman, and—in due time—sportsman. The fact is, then, his 'friend Frank,' as he always called him, and himself, were not of the same party during the Epsom meeting of this year, but for that of Ascot he was booked for the box place, as usual, on the Baronet's well-turned-out coach, which went to, and returned from, the course after the manner already described during the last year's races.

Although the intimacy between Mr. Beaumont Raby and Sir John Inkleton was not on so close a footing as was that between the Squire of Amstead and the Baronet, they were upon very friendly terms, and, as may be supposed, occasionally exchanged visits. During a morning call, when no one besides themselves was present, the following expression of sentiments passed between them:—

'I think, Inkleton,' said Mr. Raby, with a smile, 'I am indebted to *you* for the disappointment I have experienced in the character and prospects of my hopeful nephew, Frank. You have given him such a taste for hunting and driving, that I fear he is likely to abandon all other pursuits for which his education has fitted, and to which his duty calls, him. Of course you are aware I could not persuade him to go abroad on a tour, which every young Englishman with his expectations ought to do; and he also refuses to go into Parliament, although I have the offer of a borough for him, without a shilling expense. Now, as I have often told him, I object not to his being a sportsman, and he may drive his own coach, when he has one, if he thinks he can do it better than his coachman; but I did hope to see him something beyond a sportsman and a coachman—qualified, in fact, which I cannot at present consider him, for the useful and elegant intercourse of common life, in the first place, and serviceable to his country in the next.'

'You do me honour,' replied the Baronet, also with a smile on his countenance, 'by attributing to me influence over a mind so capable of judging for itself as that of our friend Frank is. His coaching propensities may, perhaps, be laid at my door; but when you recollect that his father sent him a-hunting before he was twelve years old, I plead not guilty to the other charge. As to his declining going abroad, I confess I agree with him that, without a better knowledge of foreign languages than he possesses, it would be two years of his life wasted, which I certainly considered to have been the case with myself, because my heart was *all the time at home*, where his, I am sure, would be also. And then, with respect to his being in Parliament, I scarcely know what to say on that subject. To be sure, one reason for declining—that of being occasionally interrupted by a call of the House in the hunting season—is of rather a childish nature. If every gentleman were to refuse to sacrifice a few of the comforts of life to his duty to his country, where should we find statesmen to carry on the business of the country? Still, it is my opinion there should be a kind of *ad valorem* consideration here; a man may, I think, with propriety say this to himself:—"By going into Parliament I shall make a great personal sacrifice, and the question is, shall I be, beyond the value of my vote, worth anything, when I get there? Had I not better (supposing him to be aware that he will be of no further value than by his vote) leave the vacant place to be filled by some one who is better qualified than I am for so important a situation?" And, friend Beaumont,' continued the Baronet, 'as you are fond of a classical allusion, I refer you to something like a case in point, in ancient days. Xenophon describes Socrates in conversation with a very young man, whom he knew, and who was, at that time, soliciting for a principal post in the army. To what does he compare him? To a sculptor who undertakes to form a statue, without having learnt the statuary's art! "In time of war," adds the sage, "no less than the safety of the whole community is intrusted to the general; and it is in his power, either to procure to it many and great advantages, by a prudent discharge of the duties of his station, or involve his country, through misconduct, in the very deepest distress; and, therefore, that man must be worthy of no small punishment, who whilst he is unwearied in his endeavours to obtain this honour, takes little or no thought about qualifying himself properly for executing a trust of such vast importance."'

'I remember the passage you allude to,' replied Mr. Beaumont Raby, 'and also that the lecture of Socrates wrought so powerfully on the young gentleman, that he immediately applied himself to the gaining instruction, which qualified him for the post; and why should not my nephew have done so also? The history of our country tells us that youth is no bar to a display of either talent or of action; and, if you recollect, when Homer calls Agamemnon venerable, it is not in reference to his years, but to his knowledge and acquirements.'

'Well,' resumed the Baronet, 'all I can say on the subject is, that, amongst my acquaintance (indeed, I might have been in the House myself, but I was aware of my own incapacity to do good), three very good fellows, in their way, had seats in Parliament as soon as they came of age; but I have yet to learn that either of them did anything beyond the value of their vote. One of them, in fact, disappointed me; for, being rather a cleverish fellow, I thought he would have made a good speech, and knowing it was his intention to make one, I went into the gallery one night to hear him. But what was the result? In the first place, having had a dinner party that evening, he was more than half drunk; and knowing that the motion he was about to speak on would not be called till after midnight, he went first to the Opera. Now, whether it was that, being musical, the fine singing of Catalani had quite bothered his brains, or the effect of wine, I cannot pretend to say, but this I know, he made sad work of it. He not only hemm'd and ha'd to an extent scarcely ever heard before; kept turning and twisting about his cocked-hat as if, as Addison humorously says, he had been cheapening a beaver instead of addressing a senate; but at length got so bewildered among the phenomena of his own theory, that, luckily perhaps for him, his voice was so far drowned between the "hear, hear," of his friends, and the coughs of his enemies, that not a syllable he uttered could be heard by the House. Being a good plucked one, however, he would not sit down until a friend in his rear pulled him into his seat by his skirts, to the amusement of those who witnessed it. Still,' continued Sir John, 'there are striking exceptions to this rule—none, perhaps, more so than in your own person in your maiden speech on the slave trade.'

'I thank you for the compliment,' observed Mr. Raby, 'although I see in it an unintentional rebuke. I was certainly successful in my first essay; but being aware that to have followed up this success would have imposed upon me labours that a naturally indolent disposition was unwilling to submit to; and being averse to the attempt at doing anything by halves, I gave up politics at once: and in one respect I am a gainer. I have retained the friendship of men for whom I have the highest regard, but which, being opposed to them in my views, would have been endangered in the heat of political warfare and debate. However, to return to the original object of introducing the conversation respecting Frank. As you have decidedly an influence over him, let me beseech you to use it in impressing on him moderation in his pursuits, and not to forget that, one day or another—and no one knows how soon—he may be called upon to fulfil duties of no ordinary kind. Again, I am rather inclined to believe he has somewhat of an extravagant turn, which may lead him into difficulties unexpectedly; for I hear he has already added two hunters to his stud—talks of purchasing others—and has taken apartments and stables at Melton for the forthcoming hunting season.'

'Well, Raby,' said the Baronet; 'you have now paid me a compliment, in return for one which is justly your due. With regard to expense, I have always instilled upon Frank's mind—at least, whenever an opportunity offered—the advantage of living within one's income, inasmuch as the exceeding it is the bane of all real comfort; and, believing example to be much better than precept, I have shown him, in black and white, that I live considerably within mine. As to his stud, I think that, with his allowance of £800 a year from his father, the run of the Abbey for himself and his horses in the summer, and an occasional tip from his kind uncle (here the uncle smiled, which, of course, implied assent), he may afford to increase it to six, and a hack or two: and without that number he would cut a very poor figure at Melton, and not a good one with it. And as for his going to Melton, why, I——'

'Yes, but, my good Inkleton, he has, I hear, taken stalls for *ten*,' interrupted Mr. Beaumont Raby.

'Has he?—still it does not exactly follow that, because a man takes a ten-stalled stable, he is obliged to put a horse into every stall,' replied Sir John; 'nor has he intimated as much. But since you have mentioned the subject to me, Raby, permit me to deliver my opinion on it, and that without reserve:—*Let him have his ten hunters, if such be his wish; and do you help him to buy and keep them.* You will not, I am certain, have occasion to repent of the act. If a young man attempt anything, let him try to do it well; and this, I am sure, is a maxim which you must approve. It equally applies to hunting, as to any other pursuit; and let me advise you, as you helped to send your nephew to the fountain-head of learning, where the best society was likely to be met with, to send him to the fountain-head of fox-hunting, which Melton surely is, and where advantages are to be looked for similar to those thought so much of at Oxford. You know you doat on Frank; he is a noble-hearted fellow; you will be delighted in making him happy; so at once open your purse-strings, and do so. Give him a few hundreds towards purchasing his horses, and add another hundred or two to his allowance.'

'Your logic, Inkleton, is certainly good,' said the uncle; 'you have taken it from a great authority: Dr. Johnson has told us, that whatever is worth doing at all, is worth trying to do well. I confess I like what I have seen of the Melton men; they are sportsmen and gentlemen; and although I could have wished to have seen Frank a little higher up in the tree of life, I will endeavour that he shall preserve the place he has allotted to himself. I will, then, yield to your suggestions; I will give him £500 towards purchasing his horses, and will add £200 a year to his allowance.'

As may be imagined, the Baronet was not slow in communicating this good news to his young friend, who felt, as he ought to have felt, the kindness of both parties. Nor was it without its good effect on Frank Raby, inasmuch as, in the overflow of his heart, he determined upon making known to each of his benefactors the affair of the fillies, and the result of their racing career, appending thereunto a promise that, until he was in circumstances better suited to the pursuit, he had taken his leave of racing. But how did the uncle relish this outbreak of our young sportsman, and the somewhat clandestine spirit in which it had been carried on? The fact is, he was so much pleased with the subsequent ingenuous deportment of his dearly-beloved Frank, when detailing the various circumstances as they occurred and related to himself, as the sufferer; and more especially so with the small share of vituperation bestowed by him on the scoundrel who had handled him so mercilessly, that he merely made use of this short expression :—

'Well, Frank, let all this be forgotten; you were in a serious scrape, which, no doubt, will be a warning to you, and you got out of it much better than might have been expected.'

The Baronet and his young friend having passed the evening of this day together, the former took an opportunity of expressing himself nearly in the following words :—

'If you will follow my advice, Frank, I should recommend you to abandon your present purpose of visiting Melton Mowbray next season, and I know a man who will take the stables you have engaged off your hands. I do this from a regard to your comfort and good name, being convinced, from experience, which is our best preceptor, after all, in matters of this kind, that your present income is not equal to the expenses of such an establishment as you would require at that place. You would not like to be in the background among your compeers, and nothing under a stud of ten efficient hunters would keep you in the same rank with them. Six good ones will be enough in almost all other counties but Leicestershire; and, were I in your place, I would content myself, for a few years, with what the Melton men call "the provincials," making an annual visit to Melton at the conclusion of the season, if you like it, when the ploughed countries get dry, and the sport they show, consequently, becomes rare. I would recommend you to the following packs:—to those of the Duke of Beaufort and Sir Thomas Mostyn, in Oxfordshire: to that of Mr. Corbet, in Warwickshire; of Mr. Musters, in Nottinghamshire; of Lord Darlington and Mr. Ralph Lambton, in Durham; Mr. Leche and Sir Richard Puleston, in Cheshire; Mr. Farquharson, in Dorsetshire; Lord Fitzwilliam, in Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire; and Lord Vernon, in the Atherstone country. The masters of these hounds are all of them eminent sportsmen, and, by a close observance of their proceedings, you will learn much, and be better able to appreciate what you may afterwards experience in countries more distinguished for their capability of showing sport, and which, perhaps, deservedly stand at the head of all others.'

This somewhat unwelcome advice was listened to with attention by our hero, rendered the less welcome, in fact, by the recent publication of the Billesden Coplow poem, by Mr. Lowth, which not only added greatly to the reputation of Leicestershire as a hunting country, but, from its spirit-stirring lines, had very much increased his desire to make one of the many choice spirits whose names and exploits gave birth to them.[1] His good sense, however, at length got the mastery over his desires, and to the great satisfaction of the Baronet, he yielded to his friendly advice.

[1] As Horace says of Anacreon, to relish this poem we should transport ourselves, in idea, to the time in which it was written; but one of its great recommendations is, the author having been an eye-witness of a *great part* of what he relates. As the poet says:—

'He on whose natal hour the queen
Of verse hath smiled, shall never grace
The Isthmian gauntlet, or be seen
First in the famed Olympic race;'

and that Mr. Lowth did not go to the end of this terrible run, is not a matter of surprise; for it took place over, perhaps, the severest part of all the Quorn country. There are a few typographical inaccuracies in the last edition published (although they appeared, I believe, in the original one), such as Wardle for Wardell, and 'short home' for 'sweet home.' The first-named error led to the confounding the late Colonel Wardle, of Mary Ann Clarke notoriety, with the person intended to be introduced—viz., the late Jacob Wardell, who, although not making a conspicuous figure here, became, afterwards, a first-flight man, and sold one of his hunters for 800 guineas—a great price in those days—in consequence of his carrying him through a famous run. Again, for the sake of the rhyme, justice is not done to the Hon. Martin *Hawke*, who is said to have been reduced to a *walk*, whereas, although that might have occurred at one period of the run, I have good reason to know that he was up at the end of it, and rode his mare afterwards to Melton, twenty-one miles, in company with the late Mr. Germaine.

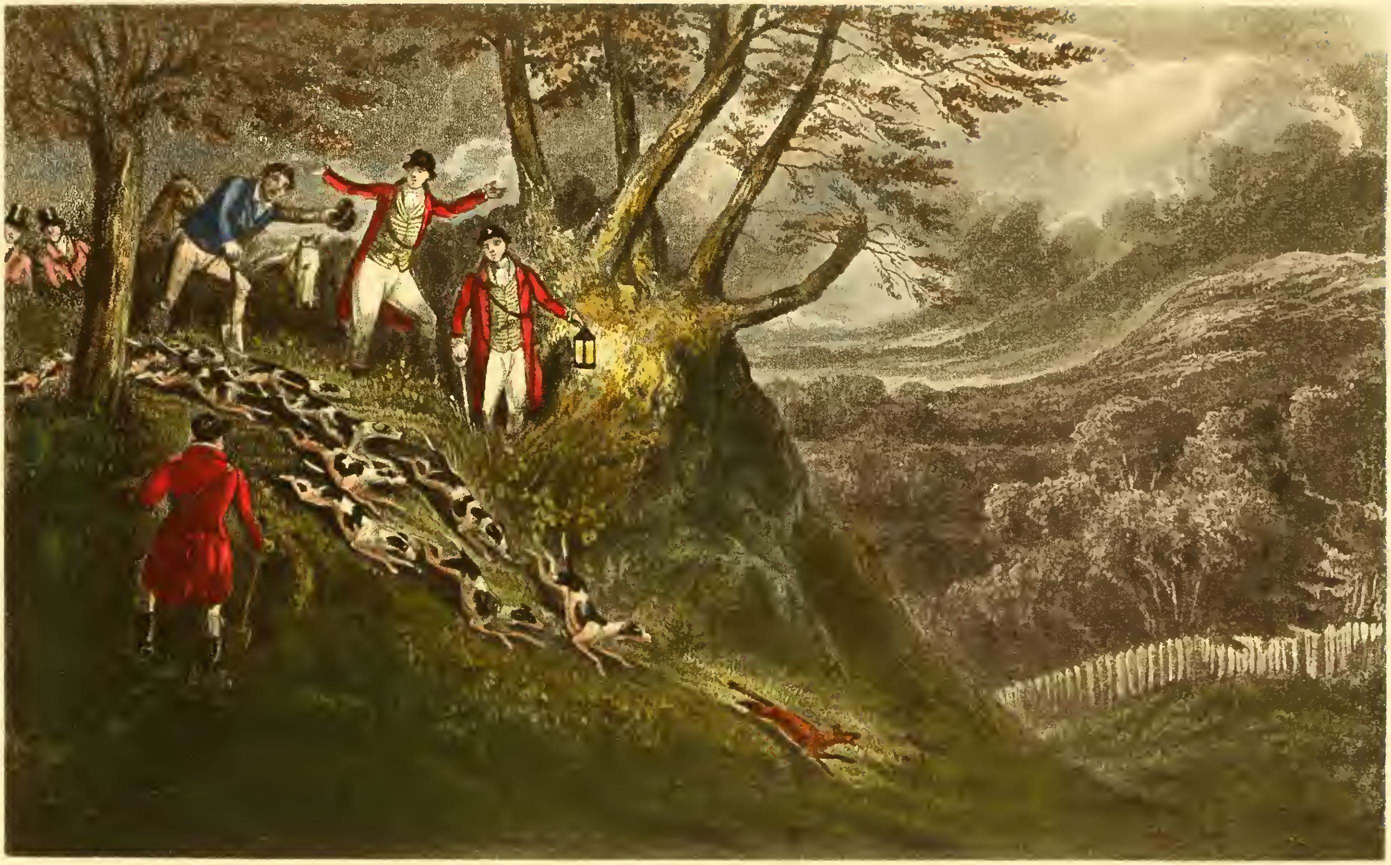
CHAPTER XIII

A season with Sir Thomas Mostyn, in the Bicester country, with anecdotes of some of the leading sportsmen in the provinces at that day, and a glance at 'home, sweet home.'

THE summer having passed away much in the same manner in which summers have since done, and our hero having partaken of the amusements of London up to a certain period, and of the partridge and pheasant-shooting at the Abbey, in the autumn, he commenced his winter career under very favourable circumstances. He had a stud of seven hunters, strong, but not deficient in blood, together with a capital hack, bred by his father, by an Arabian sire out of a strong English mare. Moreover, he had himself a naturally strong constitution, consequently, excellent health, and, thanks to the liberality of his relations, a fair account at his banker's. With a light heart, then, and well-braced nerves, he followed his horses to the humble town of Bicester, twelve miles from Oxford, on the Buckingham road, where he found a few sportsmen collected together for the same purpose as his own; namely, to enjoy the pleasures of the chase in a country of which he had had some experience during his residence at the University of Oxford.

Neither was Frank Raby disappointed in the object now in his view. He obtained an introduction to the master of the pack, a good, honest Welshman, of plain, unaffected manners, but of extremely gentlemanlike deportment, and in every way qualified for the situation he filled. A single man, possessed of £20,000 a year, and with no other heavy expenses but his hounds, he was able to do the thing with spirit, and with spirit was it done throughout. He had a full complement of hounds, and a good stable of horses; and the utmost regularity was observed in every part of the establishment. But what most struck our young sportsman, as regarded the establishment, was, the perfect little Welsh colony that was established in this part of England by Sir Thomas Mostyn and his connections, brought with them, at different periods, from North Wales. The connections consisted of Sir Edward Lloyd, since created Lord Mostyn, who married the Baronet's sister, and at length succeeded to his property; and Mr. Griffith Lloyd, his brother, a fellow of All Souls, Oxford, both good sportsmen. As may be expected, more Welsh gentlemen occasionally sojourned in the neighbourhood, for the sake of hunting with their countryman, who was deservedly popular amongst them all.

But the great object of attraction in the eyes of Frank Raby was the huntsman to this pack, the very celebrated Shaw, who afterwards hunted the Belvoir hounds with so much spirit and *éclat*. There was a peculiarity in his manner of hunting his hounds which was quite unlike anything he had ever before seen, as well as a quickness, almost approaching to wildness, in his motions, that could not be lost upon any one who was capable of common observation. And to show the repute he was in as a huntsman, and the value put on his services by his master, his salary—for wages would be an improper term for such an annual sum, although paid to a person occupying what may be called a menial situation—was £300 per annum, with a servant to arrange his apartment! And then his horsemanship also surprised Frank Raby. There was an ease and elegance in his seat not often witnessed even in the higher orders of life, together with a quickness that kept him always in his place, and this with a pack noted, as that of Sir Thomas Mostyn was, in those days, for going a racing pace whenever the scent served. And he was told of an extraordinary circumstance that occurred to Shaw, which made a lasting impression on his mind. He first commenced hunting Sir Thomas Mostyn's hounds in what is called the Woore country, comprising parts of Staffordshire and Cheshire, previously to their removal into Oxfordshire. It so happened, at this time, that, partly from a scarcity of foxes, and partly from ill-luck in not catching them, the space of seventeen days had passed over without his hounds tasting blood. Having, then, marked a fox to ground in an earth on the side of a bank, Shaw determined on digging to him, although the night had commenced, and the assistance of lanthorns had become necessary. At length he got him in his hand, not a



A night scene with Sir Thomas Mostyn

little to his satisfaction, and throwing him to the pack, who were below him, on very slanting ground, and hallooing '*Who-woop!*' most lustily, expected to see him devoured. But no; the nature of the ground favoured him; the hounds overshot their mark, and reynard, rolling himself over, escaped all their mouths, and bade them, for the present, good night. As may be supposed, there was no stopping the pack with a fox so near to them as this was; and away they went in the dark, through several strong covers, without any one being able to follow them, many not returning to the kennel until the next morning.

The name of Raby, added to some little reputation our hero had already gained in the hunting world, was a passport sufficient to introduce him into the best society of this part of Oxfordshire. Neither could he have fixed on a better place, in some respects, to have made what might be called his *début* in the hunting world, with a perfectly organised establishment, and with a view to future proceedings. In the first place, that part of Oxfordshire called the Bicester country is one in which a man attains useful lessons on riding to hounds, inasmuch as, from the depth of its soil, the strength of its fences, and its numerous brooks, it is by no means one that can be trifled with; on the contrary, it requires a good horseman, on a good horse, to be enabled to live well over it with hounds. In the next, he reaped the benefit of good example in some of the conspicuous members of the Mostyn Hunt, at that period comprising some of the first horsemen of the age. For example, the present Earl of Jersey, then Lord Villiers, would often be seen at the cover side, previously to his removing his stud to Melton for the season: Sir Henry Peyton was then in his prime, and, taking a season throughout, was not to be beaten by any man—when on Watchmaker especially, on whom he took a leap, of which a drawing was made, and a plate from it, in the *Sporting Magazine*. It was a stile, with a brook on the landing side, over which was a long foot-bridge, all of which he cleared, and stopped the whole field. The late Mr. Harrison, of Shelswell, a few miles from Bicester, was also a beautiful horseman, and had a stable of capital horses, no price stopping him. The Lloyds (brothers) were likewise good, the elder (the Baronet) especially at water. The celebrated Mr. Davey would also occasionally be seen with these hounds on the Northamptonshire side of the country, over which, being the strongest almost in England, he was much given to shine. To prepare him for Billesden Coplow, too, the quickness of Shaw in his saddle, when hounds ran hard, was by no means disadvantageous to our young sportsman as an example.

And what did Frank Raby think of the hounds? His sentiments on this subject shall be exhibited in the following letter to his friend Hargrave, who was at that time hunting in Essex:—

'Bicester, November 30th, 1810.

'Dear Hargrave,—

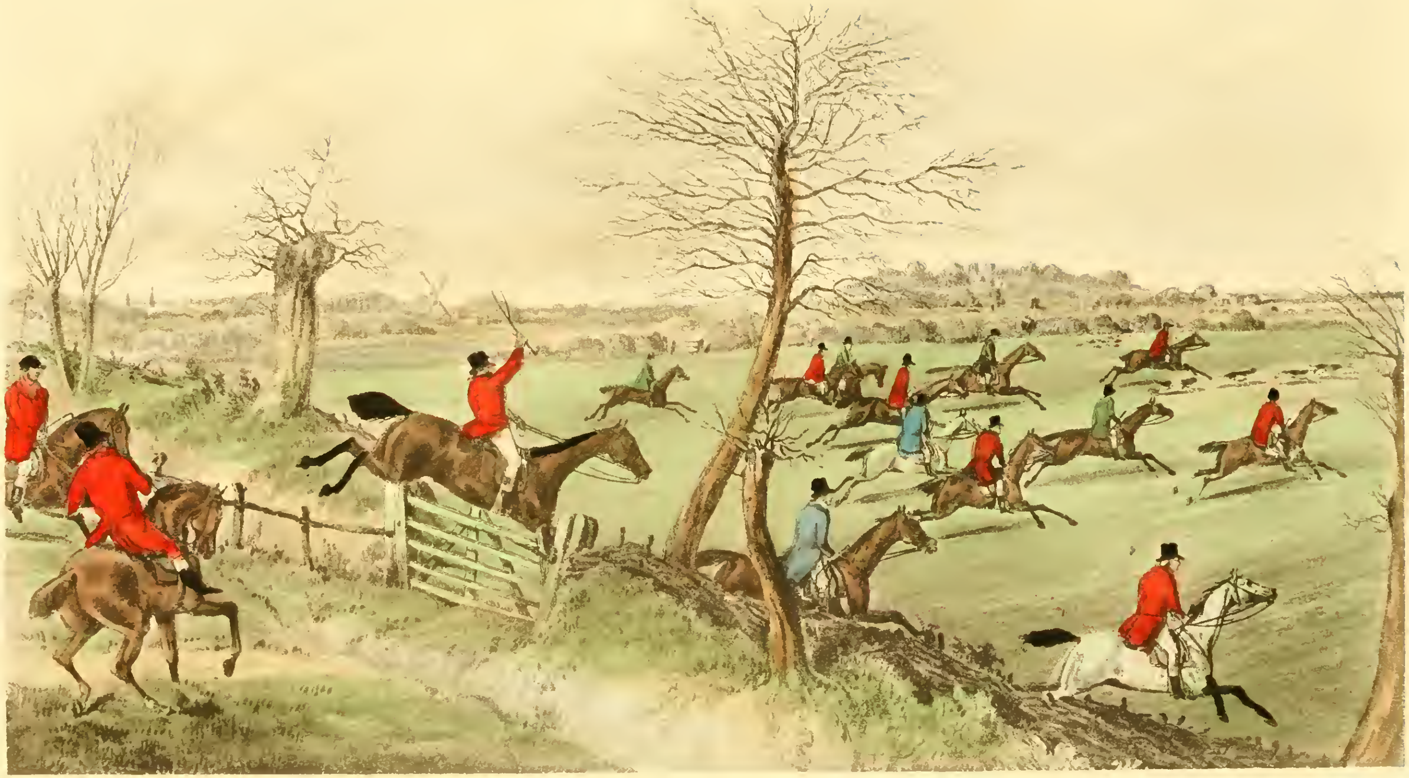
'I have spent the month of November at this place, hunting with Sir Thomas Mostyn's hounds, and occasionally with those of the Dukes of Beaufort and Grafton, when they meet within reach. I like the country much; it looks like a fox-hunting country, especially in the neighbourhood of the See Woods, and the Quarters, where the foxes are capital, and generally show runs. The Northamptonshire side of it is *superb*, but infernally strong as to fences, with the river Charwell passing through it. I saw a splendid run over it last Friday, from Bobbington Hill to Abdy Wood, in the Pytchley country, fifteen miles as the crow flies, and with only one check. Very few saw the finish, but I was one of the few, on the General, who went well to the end, and only gave me one fall. When you come here you must bring horses of power as well as blood, on account of the depth of the country in many parts; and also good water jumpers, as there are many brooks. It is not uncommon to meet with half a dozen in a day; and to convince you of the truth of what I say, I counted seven bridges on the road from Gallows Bridge to Bicester, a distance of only eight miles.

'I like the people also. Mostyn is a perfect gentleman, both in appearance and manners. The Lloyds are good sportsmen; "Griff," as he is called (his Christian name is Griffith, a Welsh but not a high-sounding prenomen), especially, who is said to have the quickest eye to a heavy vixen, in the spring of the year, of any man going, and capital in a wood. He takes rather an active part in the field, as well as in the kennel, not much to the delight of Shaw, as I am told, who anticipated injury to the pack by his being too much prejudiced to one sort of hound. For example: there is a beautiful bitch called Lady, whose picture, with her cubs, is in almost every house in the county, and from which, and her produce, there are a great number of hounds in the kennel—more than should be, good judges say. Some persons will tell you a pack of foxhounds should seem to be all of one family; but I think that characteristic should only extend to the *look,* as breeding too much in-and-in, as it is called, will not do with *either* the human *or* brute race, and no doubt the objection extends to the canine. Whether it be from that cause, or otherwise, I cannot say, but these hounds have not much tongue with even a moderate scent, and still less, of course, with a good one. With a good one, however, they go at a tremendous rate. It would do your heart good to see Villiers, Peyton, and Harrison ride a sharp burst. They are beautiful horsemen, and not to be beaten by any man in this country, or, I believe, in any other.

'I need not tell you anything of the Duke of Beaufort's hounds, as you have so often hunted with them from Oxford; but I believe you never saw the Duke of Grafton's pack. You would be much pleased with Rose, their huntsman, better known as "Tom Rose." He is the very pattern-card of a huntsman, in all respects; has a most intelligent countenance, the voice of a Stentor, speaking excellent dog language, and is a good horseman. The hounds are not so neat as Mostyn's, but have more power; and they appear to be higher in flesh, which Rose says is necessary in his very strong country, wherein the woods are large and rough. The Fitzroys are considered good sportsmen, but there is a gloom thrown over their appearance in the field by the colour of their coats—a dark green, which looks very sombre by the side of a bright scarlet, which is that of the Mostynites. The latter have the letter M on their button, which lately gave rise to a *good* joke. One of them appearing in Leicestershire in this costume, with a martingal on his horse, was asked by one of the *élite,* "whether the letter *M* implied martingal?" If you are not smothered in an Essex ditch (how can you hunt in such a slow country as that?) I would advise you to come here next season. I think you will agree with me that the country is a sporting one—the field composed of sportsmen, and the whole thing done well. As for Shaw, the huntsman, you will be delighted with him. To use a common phrase, he is as quick as lightning in all his motions—a little too quick, some of the knowing ones say; and I like to watch his countenance, when his hounds are at a ticklish point. He has a peculiar expression of the eye, which shows how his heart and soul are absorbed in the sport.

'We had a fine run yesterday, from a cover called Gravenhill, which, being within such easy reach of Oxford, produced a good show of tyros, as you and I may now call those of the cap and gown who have a taste for hunting. The fox crossed the brook at starting, and several of them got into it, as usually is the case, for you know it is a teazer. I followed Peyton, and got well over on Achilles, who, you know, is capital at water. I stuck to *him* throughout the whole run, and towards the end of it the following *epigrammatic* sentences were pleasantly exchanged between us:—"More willow-trees, Sir Henry," said I; "another brook, I suppose?" "Go along," replied this fine horseman, "and don't stop to look at it." We both got well over, and had the best of it to the end of a fine run, and over a fine country. But, talking of brooks, there is a proper teazer in the Banbury country,—no less than the Charwell, which, as you know, is navigable far above Oxford. It gets less and less as you approach Northamptonshire, and is *jumpable* in places in the Chipping Warden country. I tried it the other day, on the General, but, although he landed me, he fell back, and had a narrow escape from drowning. "The Charwell was *never* leaped," said Griff Lloyd to me. "Pardon me," said I, "it has been leaped this day, and I will ride at it again, if it comes in my way." Let me know what you have been doing in your country. Those Roodings foxes are, I believe, proverbially stout, and I am informed there is no better sportsman than Mr. Charles Newman, the master of the hounds with which you hunt. One day or another I hope I may see him.

'I have given up Melton for this year—indeed, until finances increase. Racing, also, I have promised my uncle to think no more about—for the present at least; so the hunters, the gun, and the fishing-rod, must furnish the out-a-door amusement; the cook, the butler, and the young ladies, with a peep, now and then, into the classics (for I will not give them up), the



"Not Handel's sweet music more pleases the ear.
Than that of the hounds in full cry."

pleasures within the walls, secondary, I admit, to the others; for—

No sport to the *chase* can compare,
  So manly the pleasure it yields;
How sweet, how refreshing that air
  Inhaled in the woods and the fields!
As we rush in pursuit, new scenes still appear,—
  New landscapes encounter the eye;
Not Handel's sweet music more pleases the ear,
  Than that of the hounds in full cry.

New strength from the chase we derive;
  Its exercise sweetens the blood;
How happy those mortals must live,
  When sport yields both physic and food!
So new and so varied their charms they ne'er cloy,
  Like those of the bottle and *face*;
The oftener—the harder—the more we enjoy,
  The more we're in love with the chase.

'Having become poetical, it is time to conclude; so subscribe myself,

'Dear Hargrave, truly yours,
'Frank Raby.

'*P.S.*—My uncle has been very ill; everybody says he is breaking fast. I hope not; for he is too good a fellow to drop short before his time; and although there is no doubt of my being a great gainer by his death, it is an event, so far from desiring, I would do all in my power to avert.'

There was an extraordinary character at this time hunting with Sir Thomas Mostyn's hounds, and who afterwards made himself so signal by his pedestrian feats, as to be known by name and character to all the nations in the civilised world. I allude to Captain Barclay, of Ury, in Aberdeenshire, who, a few years subsequent to the period to which I am alluding, performed the Herculean task of walking 1000 miles in 1000 hours, over Newmarket race-course, for a bet of several thousand pounds. The Captain was likewise, at this period, a great patron of the boxing ring; and our hero having somewhat of a *penchant* for the manly science of self-defence, their acquaintance grew into intimacy, which continued through life. He was also considered a good and scientific sportsman, as well as an excellent judge of a hunter; and on the subject of the latter, offered his friend Raby the following useful advice, enforcing it with the result of the performance of his own stud:—

'Purchase your hunters,' said the Captain, 'with more strength than is merely required to carry your weight. *I* get into the saddle full fourteen stone, notwithstanding which, I hunted eighty-three times during the last season, although the amount of my stud did not exceed four; and I was only enabled to do this by the superior strength of my horses. Never purchase horses,' added he, 'that are not, at least, a stone above your weight.'

The Captain and our hero being domiciled in the same town, it is only natural to suppose they occasionally met in the evening, as well as by the cover side. 'Is it true, Captain Barclay,' said the latter to him, as they sat one evening over their claret, 'that you drove the mail coach from London to Aberdeen, a distance of more than 500 miles, without any relief?'

'Quite true,' he replied; 'and I offered to drive it back again for the same wager.'

'Then your journey to London to see a fight?' resumed his companion.

'Oh!' answered this modern Hercules, 'I considered that nothing beyond the fact of my being exposed to bad weather for so long a time, having stolen a march from my regiment, saying I was only going to take a walk, and absolutely starting without a great-coat. I mounted the box of the mail at Chester (my regiment was quartered at Wrexham, eleven miles distant from that city); saw the fight at Wormwood-scrubs, on the other side of London, the next day but one; returned on the box of the mail to Shrewsbury, and, walking thence to Wrexham, appeared in the messroom on the *fifth* evening. My clothes were wet and dry several times during the journey, and you are aware how rough the box of the mail is, from the pace it travels at, in comparison with that of the stage-coaches.'[1]

'And is it possible,' continued Frank Raby, 'that a man of your athletic make can be a fast runner?'

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[1] The boxes of all public coaches were not at this period on springs, as they subsequently were.

'I never ran more than one match,' replied Captain Barclay, 'my *forte* being walking; but in a match against John Ward, which I won with 2 to 1 against me, I ran 440 yards, or a quarter of a mile, in fifty-six seconds.'

'That you are a patron of the boxing ring,' resumed our young sportsman, 'all the world knows; I am an admirer of it myself, but, partly to meet the wishes of my father, and more particularly so those of an uncle from whom I have no trifling expectations, I do not *publicly* avow myself as much.'

'My dear fellow,' said the Captain, 'you will excuse my saying, that both your father and your uncle take a wrong view of the practice and effects of what is called prize-fighting, very probably confounding it with the fights of the gladiators in ancient times—and upon a lower scale it certainly does admit of a slight comparison—in which men were either in part deprived of resistance, or opposed to very unequal force. No man now enters the ring but upon perfectly equal terms, or on as nearly such as circumstances will allow; and the display of manly intrepidity, firmness, gallantry, activity, strength, and presence of mind, which these contests call forth, is an honour to the English nation, and such as no man need be ashamed of viewing with interest, pride, and delight; and we may safely predict that, if the magistrates, or Government, through a mistaken notion of preserving the public peace, succeed in suppressing them, there will be an end of that sense of honour, and spirit, and gallantry, which distinguishes the common people of this country from that of all others; and which is not only the best guardian of their morals, but, perhaps, the only security now left either for our civil liberty or political independence. If Englishmen are restrained from fighting occasionally for prizes and honorary distinctions, they will soon cease to fight at all, and decide their private quarrels with daggers or knives, instead of fists, in which case the lower orders will become a base rabble of cowards and assassins, ready at any time to sacrifice the higher to the avarice or ambition of a foreign foe. No people under the sun are less cruel than the English now are, or so little prone to shed blood; and, even admitting there is some cruelty in prize-fighting, experience has shown that cruel sports do not create a cruel people; and, strange to say, the love of gladiators among the Romans increased as the people began to be civilised, and as their manners, in other respects, became more refined. Even the excellent and humane Titus encouraged all such exhibitions of science and manly courage; and we find Pliny, in his panegyric on the still more excellent Trajan, stating his belief, that the public shows, exhibited at that emperor's expense, had no tendency to weaken or debauch the soul; on the contrary, that they excited the courage of the spectators; making them proud, rather than afraid of honourable scars, whilst they beheld slaves thirsting after praise, inflamed with the love of victory. What did Mr. Wyndham say in reference to it, the other day, in the House of Commons?—and a more humane man than himself does not at this time exist. "It is thought," said he, "that the prevention of conflicts between inferior animals might prove prejudicial to the courage of the people. In defence of this hypothesis, Britons have ever been distinguished for what is called bottom or pluck. But conflicts between inferior animals, and those between rational beings, *such as* men, bear no comparison, inasmuch as, in the one case, the will of the combatant is not consulted, and he may consequently be compelled to fight, not only against his inclination, but likewise on unequal terms." Again, the picture he presented to the champion of the British boxing-ring, of the victim bleeding from the assassin's knife, and the accompanying inscription, written with his own hand, show his opinion in unequivocal terms. However, let me refer your father and uncle to a recent charge to the grand jury by one of our most distinguished judges, in my opinion highly characteristic of the national character, and plainly intimating that, if we do not encourage boxing, we must be prepared for the viler practices of the stiletto, or the knife. "I cannot," said his lordship, in allusion to a charge in the calendar for cutting and maiming, "but express my regret that a knife should have been found *in the hands of an Englishman,* as an instrument of offensive quarrel. It was formerly the practice in this country, when men fell out, to fight as long as they could, and possibly to do each other as much injury as could be inflicted by the personal strength of the combatants; but they fought in an open, fair, and honourable manner: they took no mean advantages; they had no recourse to deadly instruments to procure superiority, or to gratify revenge. I will take care, so long as common assaults are punishable by the law, to visit, with the utmost severity of that law, those who dare to desert that mode of defence which nature has given, and which time has almost sanctified in their own country, and who have chosen to adopt that foreign practice of employing instruments of this description against an opponent. Gentlemen, the practice of boxing has often been a subject of discussion in this country; I must say, that it seems to me a practice that may be very advantageously encouraged to a limited extent. It is, in some sort, a law of peace, for it discourages the use of unfair means of attack; it prevents malicious retaliation; it only enables men to employ, fairly, advantages they may naturally possess, and from the abuse of which they are restrained by the point of honour; and while it encourages a proper English spirit, it prevents courage from degenerating into brutality, and secures men from the treachery and malignity of those whom they have offended." This language,' said the Captain, 'is corroborated by the well-known fact that, in Lancashire, where fair boxing is very little resorted to in quarrels, there are forty cases of manslaughter for one that takes place in any other county in England. Then, as to the charge of cruelty on the part of the promoters of boxing, it cannot be sustained in the face of evidence to the contrary. Where is there a more humane man than Jackson, the present captain of the ring: or Thomas Belcher, the champion of all England? Within four miles of where we are now sitting, are two promoters of the ring—the worthy master of the hounds, and Mr. Henson—than whom the world cannot produce two kinder-hearted men. Who will accuse *me* of cruelty towards man or beast?' added the Captain emphatically; 'such was never my disposition; and I can honestly assert that, so far from having witnessed in the ring anything having a tendency to make me so, I have witnessed the display of feeling and conduct productive of the most opposite effects. Only let public pugilistic contests go on as they are now conducted—with honour and credit to the parties concerned—and, my word for it, they will be the source of infinitely more good than harm to society.'

'The sentiments you have given utterance to,' observed Raby, 'are precisely those which I myself entertain, and which I have oftentimes availed myself of when arguing the subject with my uncle. I remember reading to him a passage from the speech of an eminent counsel, who was defending five persons, indicted for having riotously assembled for the purpose of witnessing a prize fight, and resisted the authority of an officer employed by the magistrates to disperse them. "As to the practice of boxing, a great deal has been said about it of late, and the counsel for the prosecution has endeavoured to work upon the feelings of the jury by stating that such encounters sometimes terminate fatally. The common law of England had, however, made wrestling, cudgel-playing, and even bull-baiting, legal: people assembled to witness or engage in those national pastimes—those manly exercises of Englishmen—did not as much as come within the definition of a riotous or unlawful assembly, yet wrestling and bull-baiting often terminated fatally. Such sports, however, preserved the health, the vigour, and the characteristic courage of the English people, and our brave ancestors had, therefore, looked upon them with indulgence. He asked the jury to look at the practice of boxing, not through the medium of a mawkish sentimentality, but with the feelings of sensible and manly Englishmen, who partook of the generous courage which had raised this country above all the other nations on the earth. He had heard it observed, by one of the greatest advocates in Westminster Hall, that the same God who made man rational also made him resentful. It was, indeed, characteristic of Englishmen to be *resentful* of insult, but not vindictive. They preferred returning an insult or a blow at the instant, to cherishing a spiteful recollection for an opportunity of dark and malignant revenge. They were prone to the manly habit of fighting out their quarrels on the spot, and retaining no ill-will afterwards. They did not, like the people of Italy, avenge their exasperated feelings by the cowardly use of the stiletto; nor, like the people of Portugal or Spain, by the knife; neither did they gouge and maim their antagonists with the savage barbarism of North America. The practice of boxing in a ring taught them the observance of fair play. To that the infrequency of assassination in England was to be attributed. He did not mean to say that fighting of any description was not an evil, but he confidently asserted that it could not be put down without a greater evil arising out of its suppression. Boxing-matches could not be abolished without encouraging assassination: and to such a lamentable change in the English character he was sure the jury would not allow themselves to be made instrumental." '

'May I ask what was the result of the trial?' said the Captain.

'Why,' replied our hero, 'the chairman told the jury that the learned counsel had given a wrong interpretation of the law, and, commenting upon the evidence, considered it conclusive against the defendants.'

'Then, of course, they were found guilty,' observed the Captain.

'Certainly not,' answered Raby; 'they were not only acquitted by the verdict of the jury that tried them on the first indictment, but upon two other indictments arising out of the same transaction it was thought expedient not to offer any evidence against them, and verdicts of acquittal passed.'

'And what were the principal objections to pugilistic exhibitions urged by your father and uncle?' inquired the Captain.

'I do not, at this moment, recollect what my father said on the subject,' replied Raby; 'but my uncle drew on antiquity for the arguments he made use of against any such public displays, especially in cases wherein money is the proffered reward. In the first place, he contended, that a cold indifference to the sight of blood and wounds was no characteristic of the true hero; and, looking back to antiquity pronounced the Athletæ, on the authority of Euripides, to have been the worst soldiers in Greece—so much so, indeed, as to induce Solon to persuade the Athenians to allot the rewards bestowed upon them to the maintenance of poor orphans, rather than to them. Neither did gladiatorial exhibitions continue in the Roman state after it ceased to be pagan. Secondly, although it might have been good policy in the Romans to impress their soldiers with a just contempt of the power of elephants, by having a considerable number of those animals driven through the circus at Rome by a few slaves, armed with blunted javelins; and although, in Homer's time, bodily strength met with the greatest honours, being necessary to the subsistence of little governments—still, as *our* soldiers have no elephants to contend with, and as, since the invention of gunpowder, physical strength and personal exertion, so much depended upon by the ancients, are now not essential, such exhibitions are useless. Men are more upon an equality in fighting than they were in the early ages of the world. He admitted, however, that the spirit-stirring descriptions of single combats with the fist or the cestus—those between Pollux and Amycus, so admirably told by Theocritus in his twenty-second Idyllium, and between Dares and Entellus, in the fifth Æneid of Virgil, especially—had induced him to be present at a sparring-match between two celebrated boxers of his younger days. "The attitude of these men," said he, "excited my highest admiration; that of one of them, in particular, reminding me of Milton's description of the angel, whose

> '—— starry helm unbuckled, show'd him prime
> In manhood.'[1]

The firm and erect posture of the body, the head drawn a little back, the expanded chest, and the judicious position of the brawny arms, certainly display the human form to the greatest possible advantage; and, in this particular instance, I was favoured by a private display, by one of the performers, of the grand and powerful expression of his muscles, together with the agility and suppleness of his movements. Having been instructed for the occasion, he successively placed himself in the attitudes of the fighting and dying gladiators, of the Hercules Farnese, and other antique statues, as well as in that of the Atlas of Michael Angelo; finishing by exhibitions of strength and activity beyond what I considered to exist in the human form. This man became the champion of England; and, like the invincible Pancratiast of ancient Greece, finally retired to his native place, not only with honours well deserved by his bravery and good conduct in the ring, but with a competency sufficient to render his situation agreeable to him. Unwilling to be idle, however, he became a teacher of gymnastic exercises, and was, in his own person, the best example of their beneficial effects in improving the health and increasing the strength and beauty of the human figure." '

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[1] What can be finer, or more true to the life, than Virgil's description, in the fifth Æneid, of Entellus stripping in the ring?—

> 'Hic fatus, duplicem ex humeris refecit amictum;
> Et magnos membrorum artus magna ossa lacertosque
> Exuit; atque ingens mediâ consistit arenâ.'

The same may be said of the set-to between Hector and Ajax, in the fifth Iliad of Homer, and of the wrestling-match in the twenty-third.

'Well,' observed the Captain, 'I think your uncle said nearly as much in favour of boxing, or "the science of self-defence," as we now call it, as he advanced in its dispraise; and let me ask you whether you availed yourself of the liberty given you to reply?'

'Of course I did,' answered our hero; 'and I think I can call to mind most of the arguments I made use of. Meeting him on his own ground, I reminded him of some striking facts in the histories of the times to which he alluded, favourable to the pursuit in question. In the first place, I echoed your words, namely, that the love of gladiatorial exhibitions, among the Romans, increased as they began to be civilised, and as their manners in other respects became more refined; although I was obliged to admit that it ceased when they became Christians; and we are very well assured that, amongst the ancient Greeks, in the highest state of their refinement, education was not considered complete in which the powers of the body, as well as those of the mind, were not regarded and cultivated to the utmost. The statue of Hercules, as well as that of Mercury, adorned the gymnasia of Athens, whilst that city was celebrated for the cultivation of every liberal accomplishment; and those of the higher orders in society seldom passed a day without practising bodily exercises in their gymnasia, of which boxing, we may be assured, was one. Even in the time of Lycurgus, sumptuary laws and the proscription of everything that had a tendency to soften the minds and enervate the bodies of the Spartans, were enforced; and, centuries after that period, it was owing to Alexander the Great sending 30,000 children, of the best families, to be educated in Macedonian exercises, that he secured the possession of the Persian empire, which he had acquired *solely* by the effeminacy of the Persian soldiery.[1] Amongst the characters of fiction, equal honours have been given to those who distinguished themselves in pugilistic encounters; and the circumstance of the dandy, Dares, thrashing the huge Entellus, shows that the use of the fists was by no means beneath the practice of a gentleman. Then care has been taken to prove that a bullying manner rarely, if ever, accompanies true courage and even consummate skill. For example: when Hector, in the seventh book of the *Iliad*, is made to challenge to single combat any of the Greek leaders, Ajax remains silent, through modest reserve, till Nestor's speech rouses him to an offer of meeting the defiance. Again, when the lot falls upon him to be the champion on the occasion, the same reserve marks his conduct. He merely expresses a soldier's confidence in the result, and desires the Greeks to pray to Jupiter for his success. Then, as I understand is invariably the case with British pugilists, Homer takes care to show that Ajax bore no personal ill-will towards Hector when he went forth to fight him; and it is on this ground that Cicero, in his Tusculan questions, offers an apology for the gladiatorial exhibitions of his country.[1] I finished my exordium,' continued our hero, 'on British boxing, with a short extract from Jackson's *Stranger in America*, which I had written in my memorandum book for the express purpose:—

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[1] Amongst the principal games celebrated in honour of Patroclus, as enumerated in Homer's *Iliad*, boxing is mentioned; and the duel of Ulysses with the beggar Irus is one of the most diverting incidents in the *Odyssey*. The King of Ithaca seems to have been well calculated for the ring.

'"Gouging, in the State of Georgia," says the author, "is thus practised: the best man throws his antagonist on the ground, and gets up with an eye in his hand, which he has turned out of the socket with the thumb-stroke;—'*The first eye for the honour of the State!!!*' They use their teeth, sharpened with a file, and bite off ears and noses. A scuffle took place among some sailors; one of them, a practised gouger, knocked out the candle, gouged out three eyes, bit off one ear, tore a few cheeks, and made good his retreat!"'

'And what said your uncle to all this?' asked the Captain.

'Why, he gave a shudder, and expressed a wish to drop the subject for the present.'

'Had I been present at this conversation,' resumed the

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[1] Why Homer has chosen to represent Ajax as a loser in all the games in which he is engaged at the funeral of Patroclus, is not easily explained; especially as they are of a nature in which his bodily strength and vigour would have fair scope for exertion. We may suppose, however, that, having fixed his reputation by making him the resource of his countrymen on all important occasions, it is of little consequence that others excel him in sportive conflicts.

Captain, 'I would have told your uncle that, although the invention of gunpowder has put men more on an equality in battle, still, as has been proved in our numerous and generally victorious contests with the enemy, physical power in our soldiers has greatly served our cause. It has been ascertained by the means of an instrument called the hynanometer (or measure of strength), that the English are the strongest of all European nations, and, by a fourth part, stronger than savages in a state of nature. Thus it appears that the improvement of social order does not impair the physical powers of man, as some persons have imagined; but experience has shown that the strength and activity of the human frame, arising from the natural muscular conformation of its parts, can be nearly *trebled* by proper food and exercise, or what we call training. It has been proved that, under such circumstances, man is infinitely superior in strength to the horse, relatively to the size of the latter, which is to that of a man as six or seven to one; and he is capable of being trained to beat him at a continuance of labour. I, myself, walked 110 miles in nineteen hours and twenty-seven minutes, and a man named Granville went 142 miles in twenty-nine hours. Taking the average of horses, not one in a thousand would have performed either of these tasks.[1] The mechanical construction of man, however, is admirably adapted to his destination under any circumstances in which he may be placed; but the degree of strength which is attainable by exercise, and lost by effeminacy, is, unfortunately, not generally considered, or it would cause many to withdraw themselves from the slavery of luxury, and induce them to enlist under the banners of *temperance and exercise*, the true sources of enjoyment, and the only efficient means of utility. And this state of additional strength in man, together with health which none but those who have experienced it can appreciate, is found by those who are trained for the *ring* to be attained by plain but substantial food, with good malt liquor, or water, and not through the means of soups, jellies, or rich sauces, and still less of spirituous liquors, or large quantities of wine, which are all found detrimental both to health and strength.

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[1] An ingenious Frenchman ascertained the strength of the human frame, by placing on every part of a man's body, standing upright, a number of weights, in such a manner that each part supported as much as it could bear, relatively to the rest; and it was found by this contrivance that a man could stand under 2000 pounds. Supposing, then, the bulk of the body of a horse to be as I have stated, he ought to bear a weight of 12,000, or 14,000 pounds, which no horse could bear.

'Then look at our own case. Within the last ten days, you and I have hunted nine times, the distances to and from the places of meeting averaging twenty miles. Now, adding thereunto the several fine runs we have seen, during the late succession of good sport, we may safely reckon upon having ridden fifty miles per day, putting the extra exertion of riding over the country out of the question. Have either of us, let me ask, felt the slightest degree of fatigue from the doings of these ten days? On the contrary, have we not felt invigorated, and, in every respect, in better health? Have we not enjoyed our meals, and our wine, and our beds, rising in the morning with a freshness not perceptible at other periods of the year, in the summer months especially, when our exertions necessarily abate? Rely upon it, then, my young friend,' added the Captain, with no slight emphasis, 'manly exercises of all sorts should be encouraged in the youth of this country: and although the practice of prize-fighting cannot altogether be justified on moral grounds—inasmuch as the training two persons for the express purpose of inflicting serious injury to each other, in cold blood, at the hazard of sacrificing their lives, while thousands of their fellow-men are looking on, for their amusement, is undoubtedly opposed to Christian feeling; still, up to the present time, considerably more good than evil has arisen from it, in upholding the national character for courage and fair play, and enabling Englishmen to boast, not merely of their courage and fair play in their quarrels, but that *England is the only country under the sun, in which the knife or the dagger is not used to avenge insults or injuries.* There are, I am sorry to add, some signs of a departure from the strictly honourable conduct hitherto displayed in the British ring, the consequence of Jews becoming prominent characters in it: should this become manifest, it will lose the patronage of those highly respectable persons who now support it so liberally—many of them on principle—and I have no hesitation in saying, that my support, earnest as it has hitherto been, will, in that case, be withdrawn. But it is not only from the practice of boxing that national advantages are derived: the use of the cudgel and back-sword, or single-stick

—as a stick with a basket to guard the hand is called—is equally serviceable in its way; and I will show you a man, to-morrow, at the cover side, who is one of the best swordsmen in the army of the present day, having derived his superiority from the constant use of the back-sword while at Rugby school.'

The season drawing to a close, and Frank Raby, not considering his stud strong enough to make a finish of it at Melton, bent his steps homewards, and arrived at the Abbey about the first week in April, having the pleasure to find all his family in good health. Nearly the first thing that he did, was to send for Mr. Robson, the steward, and direct him as to making preparations for his stud during the summer months; neither was the order a light one. But we will describe the meeting between them on the occasion.

'Good morning to you, Robson,' said our hero: 'I am glad to see you well. I want to arrange about my hunters, eight in number, which I intend shall remain here during the summer.'

'Exactly so,' replied the Scotchman. 'We have a very good prospect of a fine bite of grass in the park by May-day at furthest, and the Squire's hunters are always turned out about that time. There is plenty of shade and water, and it will do your heart good to see how the poor beasts will gallop about and enjoy themselves on fine summer days, and how fat they get. Then there will be a fine herd of them together, with the Squire's eight, and my lady's ponies, and all the hacks; oh! how they will——'

'Ay, ay! I know what you are going to say, Robson,' resumed the young Squire, 'but I am not going to turn my horses into the park, to knock their legs to pieces in galloping, and stamping to rid themselves of flies, besides losing all their condition, which is now quite perfect. You must run me up four hovels in a dry and retired part of the park, dividing each into two, with four outlets of ground, well railed in, of about a quarter of an acre each. The doors must be double the common width, with rollers to the side-posts; and if no water be at hand, a water-cart must be made to hold two days' consumption, and a one-horse cart at command, to carry hay and corn.'

'Hay and corn!' exclaimed Robson: 'why surely, sir, you are not going to expend hay and corn on horses when they do no work! The expense of hunters is quite enough in the winter months; but surely, sir——'

'Leave those matters to me,' said Frank Raby; 'if the Squire has no very good old oats, purchase twenty quarters of the best for me, the next market day, and let the hovels and paddocks be run up without delay, as my horses will be ready to be put into them by the first week in May. But I have forgotten one thing; I understand you will have both lucern and winter tares ready by that time; and you must order a cart-load of them to be brought to the hunters, whenever my groom thinks it proper to give them.'

'The lucern and the tares will be very young at the time you specify,' resumed the steward. 'It will be a sore waste to cut them.'

'The younger the better,' answered our young sportsman; 'there is no purpose to which you can put them, that will pay half as well as that for which they are required by me. But do not alarm yourself, Robson; I shall not want many of them, having been informed by the best groom of the present day that much green food of any sort is injurious to the condition of hunters; and on their condition does half of their excellence depend. Indeed, the longer I live, the more I am convinced of the truth of Mr. Warde's maxim, that "the goodness and shape of horses go in at their mouths."'

The faithful steward having satisfied himself that the sanction of his master had been obtained for this outlay of capital, assured 'Mr. Francis' that his orders should be immediately executed, and with as much economy as possible, observing, at the same time, that, although he had never given the subject a moment's consideration before, yet he was inclined to be of his opinion as to the condition of the horses, which no doubt would be very much affected by the sudden change of keep.

'Besides,' added he, 'your horses, sir, will be *safe* in the paddocks. Since I have lived with the Squire, we have had three good hunters spoiled—two by being kicked by others, and one gored by an ox. I have heard Dick the huntsman say that he never rode but one hunter that he could not find the bottom of, in the course of the season, and that was a roan horse, called Marplot, which was obliged to be kept at house all summer, and for two reasons: first, he was so vicious that he was dangerous to the others in the park; and secondly, his body was so deep, in proportion to the length of his fore legs, that he could not reach the ground with his mouth without great difficulty, and of course straining his limbs. You do not remember Marplot, Mr. Francis, but you have often heard Dick talk of him. To be sure he always looked very different to the other hunters, especially before Christmas.'

'And how was he treated in the summer?' inquired Mr. Francis.

'He stood in the stable with the coach-horses, and Dick rode him almost every day, when exercising the hounds, in the park,' was the answer.

'His goodness in the field, and his superior condition, are accounted for,' said our hero, as he walked away from the steward; and on his road to the house he met Dick going towards the kennel. 'Where now, Dick?' said he to the man whom he once thought more of, perhaps, than of any other in the world—compared with whom Mr. Egerton was a dunce, and even Sir John but second fiddle: whose very words he had devoured as he sat on his knee in the 'hall,' when describing the run of yesterday, and anticipating that of to-morrow, which he had obtained permission to witness.

'To the kennel, to feed, sir,' replied Dick; 'will you not come and see 'em?'

'Not I, indeed, Dick,' answered Frank Raby, 'I would not give twopence to see the best harriers in the world; in fact, *I hate anything belonging to harriers*. They are always bow-wowing about the country, disturbing the foxes, and they do more harm to farmers than two packs of foxhounds, by being so long pottering in the same place.'

'Sorry to hear you talk so, Mr. Francis,' said the old huntsman, evidently chagrined at these remarks, 'but *our* hounds, you know, never hang long about any one place. Indeed, the very last day but one, the Squire was saying he wished you had been with us, on one of your best hunters; we went from Burton Clumps to Fox's Barn, good eight miles, as straight as a crow ever flew; and, out of nineteen horsemen, six only were up when we killed the hare.'

'*Horsemen!*' said our hero contemptuously,—'what sort of horsemen?'

'Why, some of the right sort, sir,' replied Dick; 'Mr. Hammond was one of them that could not go to the end, and Farmer Williams on the old grey mare.'

'The old grey mare,' continued Frank, 'fed upon clover, hay, and Swedish turnips in the winter, and lying with the feeding oxen all the summer.'

'Beg pardon, sir,' resumed Dick; 'it is true the old mare lies with the feeding oxen in the summer, but the old gentleman gives her the best of everything in the winter, and the Squire's horses do not eat better hay or corn. Then there was Lord Brock on one of his Leicestershire horses; his Lordship had quite enough of it at the finish; and, what was more, I heard him tell the Squire that he never saw hunting quite perfect till that day. It certainly was a beautiful sight to see how the hounds did their work from first to last; how they turned with the scent, and what a head they carried; and how the blood of old Tyrant told at the last, for every hound was in his place.'

Time had been when Frank Raby would have been entranced with this short but graphic description of an eight miles' burst, but the charm was now dispelled: so, turning on his heel, he pursued his course with merely telling Dick 'it was all very fine but he had taken his leave of thistle-whipping.'

Our hero's next visit was to the keeper, to inquire into the state of his kennel. This he found quite to his satisfaction. It contained three brace of well-broken setters; three couples and a half of spaniels, all as mute as a gate-post; two capital Newfoundlanders, then just coming into fashion as retrievers of wounded game; and four brace of greyhounds of the best blood in the country, some of them having proved themselves such by the various prizes they had gained. But matters did not end here. Two brace of fine young setters had been sent off into Cheshire in the pairing season, to be broken on the down-charge system, by old Potts, and were not as yet returned.

'Your kennel, Perren, is all right,' said our hero; 'I think there will be few better teams than mine, next year, on the moors. How does Jack get on in his business? Is he improved in his shooting and vermin-catching?'

'There is not a better shot than Jack in the country, sir,' replied Perren; 'and as to vermin-catching, not a crow nor a magpie can escape him, much less a weasel or a stoat. I'll back him, indeed, to kill magpies against any keeper in England.'

'How does he go to work?' inquired Frank Raby.

'Why, sir,' perhaps you will smile when I tell you,' answered the keeper; 'he gets a live magpie and a cat, and has them staked down near a wood, within a certain distance of each other, but not quite within reach, when the cries of the bird, at fear of the cat, are so loud and unnatural as to bring every magpie in the wood to the spot. He is sure to get a double shot; and such is the infatuation of these birds, by the scene that is going on, that they return to the spot, and thus afford him a second, and sometimes a third chance.'

'By the way, Perren,' said our hero, 'I heard a good story of a magpie the other day in London—or, I had rather said, the mention of the bird was very happily applied. A friend of the Prince of Wales, who says many good things, and is to a certain extent privileged to say them in the royal presence, was complimenting his Royal Highness on the excellence of his cook, adding that he supposed "there was only *one* pie which baffled his skill." "What pie is that?" inquired the Prince. "Why, sir," replied the wag, "*he cannot make a magpie.*"'

'And how are you off for foxes?" continued Frank Raby. 'Although I do not hunt in this country, and perhaps never shall do so, I am not on that account the less anxious that a good head of foxes should be found in it, and in our own covers especially.'

'We were not deficient last season, sir,' replied the keeper; 'and they have whipped off from two heavy vixens within the last fortnight; there is also a litter of cubs already in the Big Wood; but a bad misfortune happened to Jack, a few weeks back. He laid a trap overnight for a polecat, and found a fox in it in the morning, and, what was worst of all, a heavy vixen, almost ready to lay up her cubs.'

'And what then?' exclaimed our young sportsman hastily; 'was she dead?"

'She was not dead, sir,' replied the keeper, 'but her leg was so dreadfully mangled that I cut off the injured part and let her go. She was, however, found dead, a few days afterwards, by one of our woodmen, in the Birch Coppice. Jack immediately told me of what had happened, and requested that you should be informed of it, sir, for which I gave him praise.'

'That was much to his credit,' resumed our young sportsman. 'Jack always was a good fellow, and I am sure he would almost as soon have had his own leg in a trap of his own setting as that of a fox; but, in future, let him give over setting traps of any sort. I hear keepers say rabbit-traps do no harm, but I know to the contrary; they not only will hold and maim foxes, but foxes will not lie in covers where they are set.'

In our zeal for the success of the stables and kennel, we have passed over the family at the Abbey without a word of notice. After an absence of some months, and those forming part of the second year after the melancholy event that occurred, in the death of the eldest son, Frank Raby was not void of anxiety, on his arrival at the Abbey, as to the state in which he might find his father and mother. In Mr. Raby he observed little, if any, visible alteration either in person or manner. As regarded the former, his uniform habits of life, a naturally sound constitution, regular out-of-door exercise, and, up to a late period, almost uninterrupted prosperity, if they had not bidden defiance to the all-consuming power of Time, had caused his hand to fall so lightly upon him, that, in the eyes of Frank, he did not appear to be a day older than when he first knew him as his father; and as regarded the latter—his demeanour in the family circle—he had called both philosophy and religion to his aid in bearing up against a blow which he had not the power to ward off. But not so the amiable and motherly Lady Charlotte. The loss of her favourite son—the first-born of her love—had so scathed and scorched her soul, that neither the sympathy and kind offices of her friends, nor the most delicate and cherishing attentions of her family—still less the occupation and amusements sought out for her, were able to dissipate her grief, and wean her from the recollection of her child, and the tragical scenes she had gone through. She would occasionally appear joyless where all around was gay; the hue of health and contentment had nearly forsaken her complexion; and her smiles, which were wont to be so redundant, were now as transient and fleeting as an April sun, peeping from beneath a watery cloud, but obscured nearly as suddenly as it bursts forth. Such vicissitudes as these, however, are fearful lessons to all possessors of wealth and honours; and their participation in them tends to render those who possess not such dazzling appearances more satisfied and contented with their lot. But Lady Charlotte's trial was not yet completed. Having constantly present to her mind the figure of her departed son during his illness—the deep red hectic spot that burned in the centre of his cheek; the skin of his forehead of that transparent white which added the mockery of beauty to the ravages of disease: his bright brown hair having that silken flow peculiar to persons of delicate frame; his form wasted to a fearful thinness—to the utmost extent, indeed, to which the human frame can be reduced without being dissolved: and in his gait, the flat-footed tread of weakness, instead of the bounding step of youth which once was his; when dwelling upon this sad picture, then, and viewing it, as she did, through the medium of a morbid imagination, natural though we may allow it to have been—for, as the poet says—

> 'When trees do drop their fruits in autumn ripeness,
> 'Tis Nature's common course, and so we look on't;
> But when unseasonous frost nip promising buds,
> And lovely blossoms, then the heart grows sad
> To see those troth-plights of much after riches
> Untimely broken;'—

she ever and anon *fancied* that signs of the same insidious complaint were visible in the person of her eldest daughter, just budding into womanhood. Then her imagination was strengthened and her fears increased by having read in books that there is a sacred halo round those whom we see in the bloom of years destined for the grave, and even that—bugbear as it might be—would occasionally present itself to her diseased mind. Here, however, her prayers were heard, and the cup of bitterness was not suffered to overflow. Nature came to the relief of one of the fairest of her creatures: as the frame of Miss Raby expanded, her strength proportionately increased, and in three years from the period to which we are alluding, there were not two healthier nor handsomer young ladies than herself in her own county, or in the next. The health and spirits of her amiable and once beautiful mother also revived to a certain degree, and that was as much as could be expected; for the heart of woman—

> ' . . . is like the youthful tree
> The lightning strikes to earth ;
> Once scathed, its bloom no more will be :
> *It knows no second birth.*'

The domestic news, and that of the immediate neighbourhood, had been conveyed to our hero by letters from the various members of his family, during his sojourn in Oxfordshire; and his uncle had been visited by him for a few days, during a temporary stop to hunting by frost. Mr. Egerton had succeeded to the living of Amstead, it having been presented to him by Mr. Raby on the decease of Dr. Chapman; was married at the end of the twelvemonth to the second Miss Chapman; and, having the promise from Sir John Inkleton of the living of Orton, on the decease of its then incumbent, far advanced in years, this amiable man and sound scholar had every prospect of happiness within the range of his moderate desires. Neither were his expectations ill-founded. He lived to see his family grow up and prosper; and it is scarcely necessary to add that he proved a treasure to his parishioners; for, independent of being an excellent classical scholar, he possessed what, to be a good divine, every man of that order ought to possess—namely, a tolerable fund of every species of useful knowledge; and being conversant with many other branches of science besides the classics and the doctrine of his own sacred calling, he became generally conducive to the benefit of those whose souls were committed to his care.

CHAPTER XIV

A few words on summering hunters. Mr. Corbet's country and men, and the finish of the season with the Atherstone.

As may be supposed, the paddocks for summering the hunters were finished by the appointed time, and the orders of our young sportsman had been strictly complied with in the construction of them. Each hovel contained two horses, which were shut up in them at night, as well as in the heat of the day, when wetted matting was placed in the open windows, to cool the air, and prevent the entrance of flies. Their hours of being let loose in the small space of ground allotted to them, on the outside of their hovels, were from four to eight or nine in the morning, and from seven or eight to ten in the evening, unless the weather was wet, when they were invariably confined to their hovels. Their food was, occasionally, tares or lucern, in some cases mixed with their hay; and in no instance were they allowed green meat altogether for more than three or four consecutive days. And another precaution was observed. The horses were sorted according to the nature of their constitution—those which carried much flesh being put together, and *vice versâ*, the quantity of their food being regulated accordingly. In the case of two, indeed, such was their aptitude to gather flesh, that, after the first month, they were ridden out to exercise for at least two hours, in a cool place, and on turf. Their general allowance of oats was three-quarters of a peck to each horse, in the twenty-four hours, a few old beans being given to two of them, who were a little deficient in stamina, although the most brilliant of the whole stud in a burst. Their hinder shoes were taken off, but their fore feet were protected by tips, and their toes were kept shortened, the same as if they had been in work, although little was done to the sole, and the frog not touched at all. Each horse, with the exception of one that had thrushes, and was under a process of cure by the groom, stood in wetted clay for the space of two hours daily, for the benefit of their feet and legs, and some light doses of physic were administered to such as exhibited symptoms of foulness. Alterative powders, also, consisting of levigated antimony and sulphur, were given in their corn to three who did not coat well in the preceding winter, and the best effects were experienced from them. The stud were put into these paddocks on the 8th day of May, and taken into the stables again on the 1st day of August, during which time no accident of any kind occurred to them. Moreover, their condition was excellent; that is to say, to commence the preparation for severe work in the hunting season, from the firmness of their flesh in the first instance; from their not being overladen with it, to the injury of their legs, in the second; and from only a trifling diminution of muscular powers, in the third. The feet of these horses also appeared very different to what their groom had hitherto seen in those of hunters previously under his care, which had run abroad for three months in the summer. They were, in fact, in a more perfect state than when they had left off work in the spring, as far as crust and sole and frog were concerned; and, moreover, their form altogether had approached nearer to the natural one, by having proper attention paid to them during three months' growth.

This system of summering hunters having never before been seen, nor even heard of, in this part of the country, it excited no little surprise, and the expression of sage opinions that the young Squire's hunters would be spoiled for want of their summer's run in the park, which the old Squire's hunters had always enjoyed, and those of the Squire's father before him. The following dialogue occurred between Mr. Robson the steward, Dick the huntsman, and Frank Raby's groom, as they were looking at the horses in the paddocks.

'Poor beasts,' said the Scotchman; 'I am sorry to see you shut up this way, in a prison, instead of enjoying yourselves at your pleasure in the park, after the hardships you have undergone. And' (addressing himself to James the groom), said he, 'who put all this new fashion into Mr. Francis's head?'

'Lord Sandford's groom, sir,' replied James.

'And are you not sorry, James, that your master listened to him ?—are you not sorry to see the poor beasts shut up after this manner ?' resumed the steward.

'Indeed I am not, sir,' answered James; 'for if it has the same effect on these horses that it had last winter on Lord Sandford's, I shall not have half the trouble with them next winter that I had last.'

'What d'ye mean, James ?' inquired the steward.

'I mean this, sir,' said the groom: 'I had rather look after three horses in the same condition that Lord Sandford's were in all through the last season, from the very beginning indeed, than after any two we had in our stud. They were cleaned in half the time it took to clean ours after hunting: and what is more, they never broke out into a cold sweat, as ours so often did, after we thought we had got them quite dry and comfortable. Then I used to watch them when they were going to cover, in the morning, along with our horses, especially before Christmas. Ours would be in a sweat if the morning was at all close, whilst my Lord's would be as dry as a bone. I thought to myself, sir, that this must be a great advantage to these horses over ours, when they came to follow the hounds through a run, as, for my own part, I always feel weak after sweating much in my work. So you see, sir, if it is a little hard on master's horses to be pent up in these places all the summer, instead of galloping about and playing in the park, they get the best of it in the winter, by being in so much better heart for their work. Then, again, they are not tormented with the flies here, as they are in the park, for I have often watched the old Squire's hunters in the summer, and been really sorry to see how they were plagued. It was nothing but stamp, stamp, stamp, all day long, and' (addressing the huntsman) 'you remember, Dick, that you always said your famous old mare, the Queen, would not have turned roarer, nor Stumps have gone broken-winded, if they had not been turned out to grass.'

'I certainly did so,' replied Dick, 'and think so still. Indeed, I am something inclined, Mr. Robson, to be of James's way of thinking as to keeping hunters in the summer months. I have often said to myself, when I have seen the horses I ride with the hounds galloping about this park, where the ground has been as hard as a barn-floor, "surely I give you enough of galloping in the hunting season." Then, again, they come up so fat from this good land, that they never seem to me to be anything like themselves till after Christmas is turned; and, moreover, when I have done with them for the season, and they are stripped for turning out for the summer, they appear to me to be just in proper trim.'

'Well,' said Mr. Robson, 'I am not one of those who refuse to listen to reason; and from what I have heard from James and yourself, I am much disposed to believe that this method of treating valuable hunters may be better than letting them run loose in the park, that is to say, as far as their condition is concerned; but the expense is very great.'

'One would think so,' resumed James, 'but master says it is not. Indeed, he declares it is much the cheapest plan; and Lord Sandford's groom told me he has often heard my lord say he considers he has saved £2000 in the five years that he has tried it in his large stud. In the first place, never a summer, he said, passed over before, that some accident, or indeed accidents, did not happen which occasioned him to buy more horses: and in the next, he said that, if one of the stud only were to be sold at Tattersall's at the commencement of the following season, he would fetch as much extra price, by his superior condition and appearance, as would repay the expenses of summering the whole lot on this plan. In fact, the groom told me he had seen my lord's own calculation, which showed that, had he to pay for his twelve hunters at grass for three months in the summer, the difference between the charge for it, and the expenses of keeping them after this fashion, would not be more than twenty-five or thirty pounds at furthest.'

'Depend upon it, my lord is right!' exclaimed Dick.

'Well, I think so, too,' observed the Scotchman.

'*I am quite sure of it,*' said the groom; 'and I am also sure that no gentleman's horses in any hunt we may go into next season, unless it is Lord Sandford's, and a few others, belonging to some of his friends who have acted on his plan, will look as ours will look; and I have reason to believe we shall be able to do with one helper less in the stables.'

'That will be no trifle,' said the steward, and here the conversation dropped.

When the next season commenced, the appearance and condition of the horses fully answered the expectations of our young sportsman and his groom—the latter, indeed, feeling proud of them, and, of course, claiming the merit to himself. After a fortnight's hare-hunting with his father, Frank Raby and his stud made their appearance in Warwickshire. But why select Warwickshire, when other and more fashionable countries were at his option—Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, etc.? The answer is comprised in a few words. Neither his purse nor his stud were then equal to Leicestershire, in the first place: and in the next, he was strongly recommended to Warwickshire, on account of the gentleman who then hunted it, and the harmony and good fellowship that was said to distinguish the society of that long-established Hunt, and of the neighbourhood generally in which the headquarters of the Hunt were established. And who was the gentleman who then hunted Warwickshire, and was considered so particularly worthy of our young sportsman's notice? The justly celebrated Mr. Corbet—and celebrated, not merely as a master of foxhounds and a sportsman, but as possessing, to the greatest extent, the manners and deportment of the highly-finished gentleman, although of a school of a somewhat earlier date than the period to which we now allude. But it was from a desire on the part of his father and a few of his particular friends, that Frank Raby should witness a specimen of the school which had given to Mr. Corbet these highly-finished manners and deportment, that a visit to this country, in preference to any other, was urged upon him.

'I see a little of it,' said Mr. Raby to his son, when discussing these matters, 'in my own small way, as master of a pack of harriers; but, depend upon it, there are not many situations in which the manners, the deportment, and the temper of men are oftener called forth into action, and this to public view, than when placed in the trying one of master of English foxhounds. First, be it remembered, it is a post of no trifling eminence, and is apt to engender a little pride of place, as most other situations do.'

In this situation, then, as master of a pack of foxhounds, Mr. Corbet was considered a pattern-card; and as Mr. Raby had good reason to believe that, one day or another, his son would be similarly placed, he was on that account more anxious for his visiting Warwickshire whilst Mr. Corbet hunted it. He was also informed that there were a few very eminent sportsmen, members of this Hunt, from whom some good lessons might be derived. That he was not disappointed in the result, the following letter from our young sportsman to his friend Hargrave will pretty clearly show :—

'Stratford-upon-Avon, Dec. 9.

'Dear Hargrave,—

'I am delighted with all I have hitherto seen in Warwickshire. Although there are a few rough fixtures in it, it is, taken altogether, a right good fox-hunting country, and as full of foxes as it can hold. Indeed, they say here that the life of a fox is quite as safe from the gun of the poacher or farmer, as the life of a man is from the hand of the assassin. And I do not marvel at this. Old Corbet, as he is called, is the most proper man I have ever yet seen as a master of foxhounds, and as such, of course, popular amongst all descriptions of persons. The farmers, indeed, appear to adore him (as they generally do a really well-bred gentleman, which Mr. C. is), and the gentlemen love and respect him. He is also a good sportsman, and a perfect enthusiast when his hounds are in chase, although, strange to say, he will not ride over anything approaching to a large fence. How he gets on as he does—for he is generally pretty near at the end of the run—I cannot imagine, unless it be by his intimate knowledge of the country, as well as of the line foxes generally take, and the speed and goodness of his horses, which are first-rate. His huntsman, Will Burrows, is my delight. He is a sulky-*looking* fellow, and I believe his looks do not belie him ; but it is when his hounds are running that he excites my admiration. In the first place, he is a beautiful horseman : in the next, his *pipe* is the clearest and most melodious you ever heard. Then, to hear him cheer his hounds,—the bitches especially, which are his favourites—transports one. He finishes his thrilling halloo, which he ever and anon encourages them with, even when going their best pace, with—"*Have at him, my lasses*, and stick to him till he dies." But as to his never being many yards from his lasses, who can wonder at that, seeing the cattle he rides ? He has four slapping nags, able to carry fourteen stone, whereas his weight with his saddle does not exceed eleven. And a word or two about his horses, not a bad hint for us who hope one day or another to keep foxhounds. All Mr. Corbet's horses, with the exception of those he himself breeds, are purchased, at weaning time, from his tenants or the neighbouring farmers. He thus has not only a great choice, but has the advantage of having all geldings, and no mares, in his stables. I understand the price he gives is, generally, about twenty pounds, which, reckoning good keep for the next four years, puts excellent five-year-olds into his stud, at about eighty pounds, which no doubt is cheaper than purchasing them—all risks included.

'Mr. Corbet's hounds are, in my opinion, very good, but his blood does not, I believe, rank quite so high as that of some other kennels. They say he has done mischief—causing a certain degree of slackness—by breeding too much in-and-in, or from one particular sort. This has given him the somewhat classic title of the Father of the Trojans, and the foundation of it is this. Many years back, when he hunted another country, his hounds came to a check at the wall of a gentleman's park. The scent appeared to be lost, when one hound, called Trojan, was seen carrying it along the top of the wall, on which the fox had run, and thus baffled his pursuers for a time. This was the distinguishing characteristic of the hound alluded to; and his after-performances being on a par with it, he became not only the favourite stud-hound in the kennel, but nearly the founder of an entire pack, in which the parent cross was carried too far. As professed judges entertain this opinion of Mr. C.'s hounds, it would ill become me to dispute it; but this I will say, that, as far as I have seen them in the field, I can find very little to condemn. The newly prevailing fashion of dividing the sexes is adopted in the field, and the character of the two packs is that, although under very adverse circumstances the dogs may be the most efficient, the bitches are more brilliant with a straight-running fox and a good scent. Of the country, as I have already said, there is good and indifferent—none very bad; but the good greatly prevails; and by way of giving you an idea of the part esteemed indifferent, I must tell you that I saw a run, last week, from one of the covers in it, called Farnborough, of twelve miles, in which we only crossed *one* ploughed field! On the other hand, on the Northamptonshire side of the country, there is as fine a grazing district as is to be seen in Leicestershire or Northamptonshire. Then there is another country, called the Meriden country, which these hounds hunt for two periods in the year, and we have just been staying at Meriden, on the high road from Coventry to London, where the kennel is, and whence it is called the Meriden country. The covers are large and frequent, and it is altogether very unlike the Stratford country; but, speaking as a sportsman, I cannot withhold my praise of it. It is a fine, wild, fox-hunting-looking country, in which the foxes are so good that they seldom hang at all in the covers, which are, for the most part, well cut into rides, and we have been having very good sport in it. But it being better calculated for spring-hunting, when travelling foxes are to be met with, I anticipate a great treat on our next visit to Meriden.

'I have been elected a member of the Stratford Hunt Club, who dine together every day, at the head inn in the town, the room in which they dine being honoured with the title of one of Shakespeare's plays. Mr. Corbet gives us his company every Thursday, when numerous visitors are added to our party, and he generally gives us a dinner at his house once in the course of the week. We have great fun in the "Tempest," for that is the name of our room; but beyond a bottle of claret, and the wine drunk at dinner, nothing like excess is committed. Great part of the "fun" proceeds from handicapping our horses, and sporting our hands when the award is made; but beyond a few pounds hazarded in this way, and five or ten pounds on a rubber at whist, nothing like gambling is practised in the "Tempest." But perhaps the most interesting part of my letter may be a description of some of the leading members of this celebrated hunt. First, then, let me tell you, there are two brothers, by the name of Cannons, Warwickshire men, who are absolute prodigies in the field, the younger one especially, whose name is Robert. The elder rides, at least, seventeen stone and a half, and Robert sixteen stone; notwithstanding which, not a light-weight in the country can beat them; in fact, Robert is decidedly the best man in the hunt, let the pace or the country be what it may. But what surprises me is, in the first place, the extraordinary sort of eagle-eye this man—I mean the younger Cannons—has to a country, when making his way over it with hounds, and also when returning home after hunting, when he may be called the oracle of the field. "Which is the best way?" says one. "Ask Robert Cannons," is the answer invariably given. Then his coolness, when hounds are running, also astonishes me. He never appears to be in a hurry, much less in a flutter; and I have already derived more instruction from seeing him ride to hounds than I have hitherto derived from all former experience. And, added to all these good qualities, as a horseman in the field, he has the most beautiful and light hand on his horse I have ever yet beheld: he never is seen quarrelling with, or molesting him in any way, but, as though they were incorporated with each other, they go sailing along, like a ship before the wind, and very nearly as straight. In fact, few fences can stop this fine sportsman—for such he likewise is—by reason of the weight of metal himself and his horses oppose to them; and it is astonishing how few falls he gets, taking the season throughout, in which he never misses a day at the cover side. Nor is it only in Warwickshire that he shines. I was told that, one day last season, he was quite a leading man in a severe burst over Leicestershire with the Cottesmore hounds, although he got a very indifferent start. He is, of course, well mounted, and is occasionally offered immense prices for his horses, which, however, he generally declines. He has now two horses—the Conqueror and Knowsley, the latter an entire horse—for which I would willingly give him 1000 guineas, could I conveniently spare the money. But as I have taken upon myself to sketch the characters of these gentlemen, I must not stop at their mere accomplishments in the field. They are all that is amiable and delightful in private life, and their hospitality has no bounds. For instance, it was only last week that I myself made one of a dozen sportsmen—ten in scarlet, and two in black coats—that turned out each morning, equipped for the field, having been domiciled under their roof for a week, and fed with the best of everything.

'We have likewise two very celebrated sportsmen in this country, whose names stand high in Leicestershire; namely, John Halls and John Lockwood. The former is one of the very best of the gentlemen jockeys at Bibury, and the latter remarkable for the high prices for which he has sold his horses, after distinguishing themselves under his weight—

upwards of fourteen stone. A short time back he sold one called Faith, for 750 guineas, in consequence of his having been the only one that could live with the hounds over Newbold Field, and leap a large fence into Lord Northampton's park afterwards. So anxious was the gentleman who purchased him to possess himself of such a treasure, that he sent an express off, in the night of the day on which the circumstance occurred, to make an offer of the money, in case another customer should be before him. Newbold Field is certainly one of the most distressing pieces of ground that I ever rode over, and Faith must be, as he has the appearance of being, a most superior horse to have crossed it on the day I allude to, when it was in a very tender state, and very highly ridged.

'There is a very gentleman-like young man hunting with us here—indeed, he resides within the limits of the hunt—who has introduced a somewhat novel style of seat on his horse, which, although perhaps he may carry it to an extreme, appears to succeed with him, and will, no doubt, induce many to follow his example, to a certain extent. I allude to the increased length of stirrup-leather which this man, whose name is Welch Posten, allows himself, extending almost beyond that used by the military, or in the *manége*. It is likewise worthy of notice, that, although his height is nearly six feet, he rides two mares, neither of which are fifteen hands high, but which are very difficult to beat with their owner on their backs. I am told he gave 400 guineas for them, and they are well worth the money, being very accomplished fencers, and nearly thorough-bred. You have often heard me say that I thought both you and myself used stirrup-leathers of not sufficient length; and the case I now allude to confirms me in that opinion, so much so that I have dropped my stirrups at least three holes. I am convinced that I sit easier on my horse by having my weight placed near to the shoulder, on that part, indeed, which is the point of union in the horse, instead of near to the loins, which are the weakest part of his frame.

'But speaking of extraordinary men in our line, I must say a word of one in this hunt, whose equal, perhaps, is nowhere else to be found. His name is Stibbs, and so inveterate a lover of the chase is he, that he is not contented with hunting with Mr. Corbet's foxhounds four days a week, which is the number of their hunting days, with a bye one occasionally, but he absolutely keeps a pack of harriers, to hunt the other two. The climax, however, is yet to come. On being informed, one *Sunday* morning, that a fox which had been brought to him over night, had escaped from the place in which it was confined, he ordered horses to be saddled for himself and his man, and letting out his hounds, laid them on the scent of the fugitive, and killed him after a sharp burst! This very extraordinary man never misses a day in the season; he knows hunting well, and is rapturously fond of it, but, being shy of fences, sees very little of a run: nevertheless, by an intimate knowledge of the country, like his friend Mr. Corbet, he generally appears shortly after the chase is finished, be it never so good.

'One of the bright features in this hunt is a ball and supper, given annually to the ladies and gentlemen of the neighbourhood, at the sole expense of the members of it. That for this year took place last week, and certainly was one of the best I ever witnessed out of London. However, a description of such matters is not much in my line, neither do I suppose it would be very interesting to you; still, as I know you like a neat effusion of the lyric muse, and especially when she sings of the chase, I will transcribe a song that was made for the occasion by the Rev. T. Willy, and sung by him after supper, with the very best effect:—

"The triumphs of heroes let others declare,
Or in ecstasy sing of the charms of the fair;
    Of love, or of war, may the verse freely flow!
Let the glass aid the song, while those pleasures I trace,
Those enlivening joys which arise from the chase.
    Tallyho! tallyho!—see the well-chosen
    Pack, how they gallantly go!

A southerly wind, and light clouds in the sky,
The air mild and fresh, nerves and spirits all high,
    Tallyho! tallyho! to the cover we go:
Hark! Reveller's speaking—By heavens! 'tis good,
Get forward and cheer them well out of the wood.
    Tallyho! tallyho!—see the well-chosen
    Pack, how together they go!

Erect in his stirrups, with listening eye,
The master is catching at Batchelor's cry;
    Tallyho! tallyho!—all seem eager to go.

Restrain your wild ardour, as yet, within bounds,
And wait to ride after, not over, the hounds.
    Tallyho! tallyho!—see the well-chosen
    Pack, how together they go!

With eye beaming cunning, and light-tripping pace,
See the fox steals away—hear the pack in full chase;
    Tallyho! tallyho!—how together they go!
Hold hard, for a moment, and give them fair play:
You'll all want your top-speed, if they once get away.
    Tallyho! tallyho!—see together they go.

How some, fairly mounted, go striding along,
While others hard labour with bit, steel, and thong:
    Tallyho! tallyho!—how they struggle to go!
Hold hard! is the word, but I strongly suspect,
Not the hounds, but some horses are brought to a check.
    Tallyho! tallyho!—how they gallantly go!

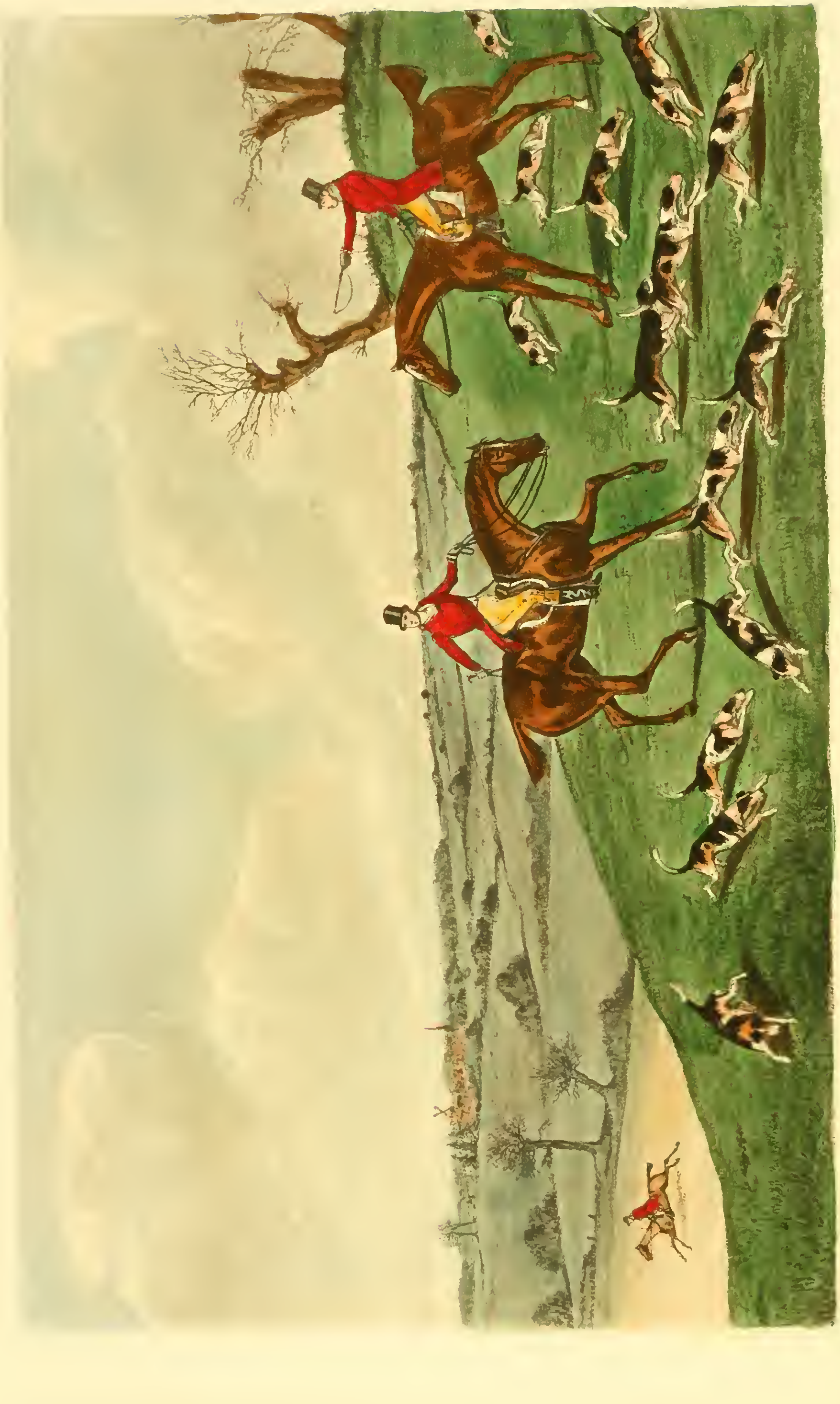
Yon fence seems a tickler—*get on to the charge*;
See the ground appears sound, though the ditch may be large;
    Tallyho! tallyho!—get forward, sir, go.
One tops it, one baulks it, and, craning, turns round,
While a third quits his seat for a seat on the ground.
    Tallyho! tallyho!—how together they go!

For a moment a sheep-foil now baffles the scent,
See them stooping and questing—each tries where he went;
    Tallyho! tallyho!—how they cautiously go!
Old Trojan has hit it—no doubt can remain;
Not a moment is lost—they're together again.
    Tallyho! tallyho!—how they gallantly go!

Now mark, in the valley, how motley the scene;
Here men want their horses—here horses want men:
    Tallyho! tallyho!—very few seem to go!
One loses a shoe, and another votes lame;
Who is that in the brook?—*Oh! ask not his name.*
    Tallyho! tallyho!—how together they go!

Once more, wet and weary, poor Reynard is view'd;
By few, save the pack, any longer pursued;
    Tallyho! tallyho!—they are good ones that go!
Nor pluck, speed, nor cunning, the chase can prolong;
WHO-WHOOP! is the word, and who-whoop to my song.
    Tallyho! tallyho!—may the Warwickshire
    Pack ever gallantly go."

'Now, my dear Hargrave, I think I have told you nearly all that can interest you respecting this part of Warwickshire, which I strongly recommend you to visit next season. I think you



"The check."
"For a moment a sheep-foil now baffles the scent."

will agree with me, that it is one which cannot fail to show sport, with a good pack of hounds, which those that now hunt it really are: and it is not very difficult to ride over. Your horses are, no doubt, good timber and brick jumpers, as you have plenty of that work in Essex: but when you come into Warwickshire, you must expect a few falls, until your horses learn to *extend* themselves in their leaps more than what is required in Essex, many of the Warwickshire fences being composed of either a strong blackthorn hedge, or a flight of rails, with a wide ditch to boot, which, if it happen to be on the landing side, acts as a trap to your nag, unless he be prepared for it, by extending himself in his leap. There are not many double fences; less, I think, than in any other country in which I have hunted; but unless a horse can go well in dirt, he has no business in Warwickshire, for some part of it is infernally deep, especially on the breaking up of a frost. I saw every horse blown to a standstill in twelve minutes, the other day, in the neighbourhood of Southon, which is the deepest part of any. It was a ridiculous scene, when about a dozen of us came to a low gate, which none of our horses had the power to leap. Robert Cannons at last crammed his horse *through* it, and so released us from our prison; for there was no other way of getting out of the field, from the immense height and strength of the fence. In the Meriden country your horses will excel, because the fences there are, for the most part, placed on a bank, and not planted on the ground, as in the Stratford. I am going to finish the season in the Atherstone country, from whence you may hear from me again. In the meantime believe me, dear Hargrave,

'Truly yours to the end,
'FRANCIS RABY.'

No small degree of interest was excited in the breast of our young sportsman on his arrival in the Atherstone country, by reason of the high character he had heard of the nobleman who then hunted it, and also of his huntsman, who had the reputation of being one of the best at that time of his class. The former was the amiable Lord Varney; the latter, the civil and unpresuming Sam Lawley, as clever a huntsman as ever hallooed to a hound, and equally good in the saddle. The hunt was distinguished as being composed of a select number of gentlemen, of high character in their calling, and everything in Lord Varney's hunt was conducted with a propriety and respectability that left nothing to be wished for by the members of it, or by those who occasionally joined it.

The Atherstone country is soon described. On the Staffordshire side it is woodland, and bad for scent; on those of Derbyshire and Leicestershire, very good indeed. In fact, from Burbage Wood, or Tooley Park, or Bosworth, a run may be seen over as fine a country as even a Melton man would desire. And the mention of a Melton man reminds me that I may as well at once transcribe the first letter from Frank Raby to his friend Hargrave, inasmuch as, amongst other matters, it has reference to the doings of Melton men, in conjunction with those of some of the conspicuous characters of Lord Varney's hunt.

'Atherstone, Feb. 2.

'Dear Hargrave,—

'According to promise, I report progress in this country, as it is my intention to do of others which I may visit, to the end that, when you are able to break loose from your trammels (but mind me, Hargrave, I commend you for complying with the wishes of your excellent father, [and confining yourself to Essex, so long as he continues to express them, for he is deserving of everything at your hands), you may also visit such as I recommend, and eschew such as are not worthy of your notice.

'In the first place, you will be greatly pleased with the noble master of the pack. He has all those mild and amiable features in his character and deportment which distinguish the English gentleman, together with as much of the consciousness of superiority in society as, in courtesy, we accede to the English nobleman. He is also as much of a sportsman as it is necessary that a master of foxhounds should be who employs an experienced huntsman; but in this respect, his brother, the parson, is allowed to stand before him. As for his huntsman, I am delighted with him, considering him to be everything that a huntsman should be; and when I tell you that 1000 guineas were offered, the other day, for three of the horses which he rides with the hounds, I will leave you to guess how he is mounted. His first whipper-in, also (Harry Jackson), is a very clever fellow, and by the appearance of the pack, by the cover side, there must be a good man in the kennel.

'There are several very superior horsemen, as well as sportsmen, members of this hunt—both heavy and light weights. Among the former, indeed, there is one—namely, Mr. Boltaby who treads hard on the heels of the extraordinary performer I spoke of with the Warwickshire hounds, inasmuch as he is always in a good place in a run, although not nearly so well mounted as the hero of the "Warwickshire lads." Among the latter is what may be called a *rara avis* in the land. He is a tanner of hides by trade, and resides in the town of Nuneaton; and neither himself nor his mare—also a *rara avis* of her kind—have pretensions nearly equal to their merits. In the first place, he is a very small person; and in the next, his mare is of equally diminutive size; nevertheless, there not only is not a man in the Atherstone hunt that can beat the tanner on his good little mare, but, strange to say, he has gone out two or three times with the Quorn hounds, in their strongest country, and been amongst the foremost men in the field. In fact, so annoyed was one celebrated character in that hunt, at the presence of the tanner and his mare, following him as though they had been his shadow, and over every description of fence, that he was at length heard to exclaim, "Now I'll break his d——d neck." But the neck of the tanner was spared, perhaps, by a fortunate occurrence. The celebrated character I allude to, mounted, perhaps, on one of the best horses in Leicestershire, rode at some timber, a foot or more higher than the little mare's back; but, breaking the topmost rail, the tanner and his mare followed him. But his history does not rest here. Being invariably clad in a light green jacket, he has obtained the *sobriquet* of the Parrakeet, to which his flying propensities—for no man goes faster after hounds, or gets over higher fences—have sufficiently established his title. At all events, he is a gallant little fellow, and his good little mare may well be said to be nearly worth her weight in gold.

'To describe a run with hounds is so difficult a task—at least, when justice is to be done to the subject—that I am almost afraid to attempt it; nevertheless, I cannot resist giving you a short account of one we had last week, attended with some peculiarly interesting circumstances. In the first place, I must tell you, that the uniform colour—if I may so express myself—of the Atherstone hunt is orange, whereas, you know, that the Quorn men all ride in scarlet. Next, it being known that a number of the Quornites, as Dick Knight called them, had signified their intention of being out with Lord Vernon's hounds, on Tuesday last, at Bosworth, a report had gone abroad that should a good fox be found, there would be a sort of contest for the brush—more properly speaking, for superiority of horsemanship and nerve—between the men in orange and the men in red. This actually took place; but, my good fellow, Hargrave, how can I find words that will convey to you even a faint description of the interesting scene? An epicure cannot judge of a dish of meat by the palate of another; a musician must hear the concert he presumes to criticise; in fact, we can do nothing of this sort *by proxy*. It is not that the subject is poor, but that my language is incompetent. However, let me try what I can do.

'The fixture was Bosworth—on the very ground on which Richard III. lost both his crown and his life; and the field was unusually large for this part of the world, consisting of at least 150 horsemen, amongst whom were about a score of the Quornites on their very best nags. They were easily distinguished, first, by the colour of their coat—for, until I saw them together, I was not aware of the strong contrast between the orange and the red; and next by the superior form and condition of their horses over the generality of those of our party. Amongst them I particularly noticed Sir Henry Peyton's Watchmaker, a superb horse, the same that you see in the *Sporting Magazine*, where he is represented clearing a stile and brook with Sir Henry, and setting the whole field. Then there was Mr. Lindon on his famous horse The Clipper, and the celebrated Tom Smith on Jack-o'-Lantern, by Meteor, out of a sister to Tickletoby, said to be the two best horses in Leicestershire. And amongst them were Sir Stephen Glynne and Lord Foley, who are domiciled at Mountsorrel, in the same house with Sir Henry Peyton; and I noticed George Germaine, Parson Bennett, Forester, *cum multis aliis* unknown to you, but all first-raters. Then there was John Raven, Meynell's old huntsman, but now Lord Sefton's, who came to witness the events of this day. And this reminds me, that Lord Sefton himself was in the field with two of the finest horses I ever saw in my life. He calls one Plato, and the other Rowland, and they cost him no less than 1800 guineas. Then their condition was splendid. You are aware that it was in consequence of my conversation with his groom, that I kept my horses last summer in the house, and have determined upon never again turning them to grass.

'As you may suppose, we made the best turn-out in our power, on this day, from this side the country, and a most respectable appearance we cut. Sam Lawley had a picked pack for the occasion, and was mounted on his best horse, John-o'-Gaunt, one of the three for which 1000 guineas were offered. We all, indeed, skimmed the cream of our studs, myself upon Topthorn, whose condition was much admired. But now to business:—

'We found in the first cover we drew, and the fox went boldly away at once; and, by the quickness of Sam Lawley and his whips, the hounds came out in a body. "But they were pressed upon and ridden over," methinks I hear you say. Not a bit of it. They had sportsmen to deal with, who gave them fair play. But the *esprit de corps*, you will assure me, or, in other words, jealousy, must have operated to their disadvantage. This I also disclaim on the part of the whole field; at least, I saw nothing like it: but every man's object was merely to live with the hounds, which was as much indeed as they could do, for the pace was desperately quick. And the hounds got an advantage in the first five minutes, and a great one it was. A brook—the very brook, I believe, in which the mangled remains of Richard were thrown, and which, even to this day, the country people believe to be tinged with blood—and a small ozier-bed very soon presented themselves, and somewhat checked our career, as the horses did not like them—perhaps they smelled the blood, though I should rather say, the bog. However, all in the same line with myself got over, Peyton, on Watchmaker, being the first. The pace now became awful, as we had ground to make up, and those near the hounds could, without any difficulty, be distinguished. There were about an equal number of orange and red, neither appearing to me to prevail. I am speaking of the first twelve minutes. It was now that a trifling superiority was exhibited amongst those who, with myself, were on the left of the hounds. A large timber fence presented itself, high and stiff, and on the other side was a green lane, the sides of which were covered with gorse, so as to render it impossible to see what kind of ground the said gorse concealed. It was, however, evident that it was of a very uneven description, together with the certainty that, from what could be seen in the middle of it, the entire lane was cut up by deep waggon ruts, and, moreover, the drop into it was considerable. Eleven of us, then in front, came up to this fence, but not one of us liked it. The twelfth was Lord Foley, on a thorough-bred horse, which had been one of the best plate horses of his day, and, without pulling him out of his stroke, at it he went; and although he floundered a little on landing, he kept his legs, and went on. Here the red had it, for Lord Foley got the lead, although there were a few on the right who were nearly on as good terms as his Lordship was. It was gallantly done, however, and due praise was given both to the rider and his horse. We all got over this fence, but could not catch Foley till we came to the first check. And how were matters here? Why, strange to say, there were seventeen of one Hunt, and fifteen of the other, well up, but the majority were in orange! "How is this?" inquired one, who was becoming somewhat sanguine on the occasion. "They knew of a better place than we did, over the brook and across the ozier-bed," replied one of the *couleur de rose*, "but they ride devilish well."

'The science of Sam Lawley, whose eye had been on his hounds when they checked, soon put matters to rights, and before many of the stragglers had come up, we were all at work again. But to make short of my story, as far as the run is concerned. Our fox led us over a beautiful country; and, within two fields of Aylestone gorse, on the other side the road leading from Leicester to Lutterworth, we ran into him in the middle of a large field—distance about twelve miles as the crow flies. "And who saw the finish?" I think I hear you eagerly exclaim. Not many, for the pace had been severe from first to last; and the fox went so straight, that few chances were given to those who looked out for *a nick*. But the colours of the coats! You will be equally curious on this point. I will soon satisfy your curiosity. There were eleven Quornites and eight Vernonites well with them at the end, and about an equal number of each—say a dozen or fifteen—in not a bad place. Fine horsemanship was displayed on each side; and it struck me that the Quornites had the best of it towards the finish, by the superiority of their horses, and *the condition of them*, for, until the last three miles, the orange and red appeared to me, and to others, to be, as nearly as we could guess, equal.

'I only regret that you did not see the run, which was a splendid one from first to last, and I strongly recommend you to the Atherstone country. And I also recommend you to see another pack kept in this part of the country, more for the sake of the owner of them, than for their performances in the field. I allude to Mr. Adderley, who is one of the breed of English country gentlemen of the old school—most polite, most unaffected, most modest, most humane, perhaps, of his order: but the most unlikely person to be at the head of a pack of foxhounds that England or any other country can produce. By the bye, I will tell you no bad anecdote respecting him, which I had from his own lips. Being in want of a huntsman, one of the most celebrated of the present day happening at that time to be out of place, offered his services, and was engaged. He arrived on a Saturday night on his hack, with a small pair of saddle-bags under him, leaving his luggage to follow him per coach. The following morning he was desired to feed his hounds at nine o'clock, as Mr. Adderley required that all his servants should attend both morning and evening church. The huntsman obeyed orders to the very letter, and behaved remarkably well in church. At nine o'clock at night the bell rang for family prayers, at which Mr. Shaw (for such was his name) conducted himself with becoming reverence. But when Monday morning arrived, where was Mr. Shaw? He was not to be found, having put his saddle-bags under him, on his hack, and trotted quietly off—leaving word that "he thought he was hired to hunt a pack of foxhounds, but finding that his chief occupation was to *pray*, he begged to resign his situation to one who was better qualified for the office than himself."

'I must now conclude. These long letters will make you imagine, with Mr. Shaw, that my chief occupation is not hunting, but writing: I, therefore, bid you, for the present, adieu.

'FRANCIS RABY.'

CHAPTER XV

The death of Mr. Beaumont Raby, and the installation of the hero into a regular sporting establishment, the details of which are given at some length.

On the day following the date of this epistle, our hero received a letter from his father, informing him of the dangerous situation in which his uncle's life was placed, by an accident that occurred to him as he was stepping into his carriage to go to the opera. The extent of it was a mere simple fracture of the left leg, which, had it happened to his brother, instead of himself, would have shortly yielded to common medical treatment; but it was not so with the indolent and highly fed Mr. Beaumont Raby. Unpleasant symptoms appeared about the fifth day; and by the time his nephew arrived in London, having been sent for by express, at the earnest desire of the sufferer, he was considered to be beyond the reach of all human aid. Moreover, he was himself aware that his hour was near at hand; but, having a perfect command over his intellectual faculties, he thus addressed his nephew, at the second interview between them:—

'Now, my dear Frank, having recovered myself from the emotion which your presence occasioned, "Richard is himself again." Draw a chair towards my bed, and not only hear, but *mark* what I am about to say. But why do you weep, my dear boy? If tears were becoming, they should fall from me, inasmuch as I have reason to believe I am about to quit a world with which I have no small cause to be satisfied, and I should be a hypocrite to say I shall not leave it with regret. But shall we receive good, and shall we not receive evil? Vain hope! and such I now find it. I have, however, one consolation in this evil hour, and that is—in the station I now hold in society being about to be filled by yourself. You will succeed to all I possess, beyond a few legacies to friends, and annuities for their lives to old and faithful servants; and I pray to God, that you may make a better use of the means at your command than I myself have done. But he who tastes nothing but the sweet poison of prosperity, which hitherto has been my case——'

Here the feelings of the sufferer overcame him, and, concealing his brow with his hand, he remained silent for a short time; but having recovered his self-possession thus continued to speak:—

'I am weak, my dear Frank, as you must perceive; but let us look on a brighter picture. In addition to what you will receive from me, you may one day inherit the large possessions of your father. Endeavour, then, to tread in his steps, rather than in mine. The reigning error of my life has been the mistaking the love for the practice of virtue, and being the friend of goodness, rather than a good man. In your father, the union is accomplished: and whilst I have been amusing myself with a phantom of happiness which has been always dancing before my eyes—turning them, alas! from the light of Reason which would have discovered the illusion, and shown me what, perhaps, I never wished to see, my own real case—he has possessed himself of the reality, by fulfilling every duty incumbent upon an English gentleman, and, I may safely add, the Christian. Compared with his, then, mine has been a solitary, a barren, and a cheerless existence, and my name will be forgotten ere my remains are cold. As the shadow waits on the substance, Frank, even so true honour follows virtuous actions, and not merely the profession of them.'

The natural strength of Mr. Beaumont Raby's constitution had, to a certain extent, rallied after passing a tranquil night, in which sleep—that *vis medicatrix naturæ*—had come to his relief; and it was not until the eighth day after this interesting conversation took place between himself and his nephew, that death came to his relief—on the very day, indeed, on which he had arrived at his fifty-third year! On his will being opened, matters stood thus:—He bequeathed £1000 to Mr. Egerton, 'as a mark of gratitude for his having instilled those notions of propriety into his nephew that would not fail to benefit him through life': £100 to one of his oldest friends, and the same to his brother, to purchase mourning rings; annuities of fifty pounds to three of his own servants, 'who had served him faithfully in their respective situations': and the rest of his fortune, without any stipulation whatever, 'to his dearly beloved nephew, Francis Raby, trusting that he would make a better use of it than he himself had done. It consisted of £137,000, in the three per cent. consols, together with a small estate in Hertfordshire, of about 150 acres, on which it had been his intention to have built a villa for his summer residence, but the natural indolence of his character, together with his love of Brighton at that period of the year, had prevented his putting it into effect. And there was a short codicil to the will, bequeathing fifty pounds a year to the poor of the parish of Amstead, for ever. His remains were conveyed to the family vault at Amstead; and in the course of a few months, a plain but neat monument was erected to his memory, having the following simple inscription, from the pen of his afflicted brother:—

Sacred to the Memory

OF

BEAUMONT RABY, ESQUIRE,

YOUNGEST SON OF ANDREW AND THE HONOURABLE MARTHA ALICIA
RABY, OF AMSTEAD ABBEY, IN THE COUNTY OF LINCOLN;
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY, 1803, IN THE
FIFTY-THIRD YEAR OF HIS AGE.

ALL WHO KNEW HIM CAN ATTEST THAT HE WAS A MAN OF A
SINGULARLY MILD AND AMIABLE DISPOSITION—EVERY THOUGHT AND
ACT OF HIS LIFE PROCEEDING FROM THE OVERFLOWING OF A
WARM AND TENDER HEART. POSSESSING SOUND SENSE AND
PRUDENCE, JOINED WITH MUCH URBANITY OF MANNERS,
AS WELL AS STRICT INTEGRITY OF CONDUCT, HE
MIGHT HAVE QUALIFIED HIMSELF FOR THE
HIGHEST OFFICES OF SOCIETY:
BUT HIS ATTACHMENT TO LITERARY PURSUITS, COUPLED WITH A DESIRE
FOR RETIREMENT AND EASE, WHICH HE WANTED RESOLUTION TO
COMBAT, CONFINED HIM TO THE STATION HE HELD—THAT OF
AN ACCOMPLISHED GENTLEMAN.

THIS SIMPLE MONUMENT, ACCORDING WITH THE UNPRETENDING CHARACTER
OF THE DECEASED, IS HERE PLACED BY HIS AFFECTIONATE BROTHER,
ANDREW RABY, AS THE LAST TRIBUTE OF HIS REGARD AND LOVE
FOR ONE TO WHOM HE WAS MOST CLOSELY UNITED, NOT ONLY
BY BLOOD, BUT BY AFFECTION.

As may be supposed, the situation and views of our young sportsman were materially changed by this accession of wealth —for such it may be called, when devoted to the purposes of merely one individual. The following three years, then, find him, first, the tenant of a large mansion and domain in one of the midland counties, secondly, with an increased stud, and not only of hunters, but coach-horses; thirdly, a member of Bibury and Kingscote Racing Clubs, and of the B.D.C., or Benson Driving Club; fourthly, with a house and fourteen-stalled stable at Melton Mowbray; and, fifthly, a member of the House of Commons. Let us look, then, at his proceedings in these several stations, of no small importance in our eyes.

As may be imagined, the mansion he had fixed upon was selected with an eye to the amusements to which he was devoted, and to as much enjoyment of them as could be procured for a certain given sum. Hunting is here not taken into the account, our hero having satisfied himself that there is only one part of England in which the chase could be enjoyed to perfection, and in that he did not wish to reside all the year, for more reasons than one. A great object with him was good roads, which Leicestershire at this period was deficient in. Another, was good partridge and pheasant-shooting, to neither of which were the rich pastures of the queen of all hunting countries accounted favourable, from the general absence of corn-fields. Our young sportsman then set himself down with a *clear* £4700 a year at his command, in a fine old mansion, whose grounds opened into the great Holyhead Road, which, even at that period, was one of the best in England, and, from the numerous coaches running upon it, the most interesting and amusing to a person who, like our hero, is fond of the humours and proceedings of what is called, 'THE ROAD'; in fact, nothing could be more to his mind, during the lifetime of his father, than the place we have now spoken of. As has already been stated, the gates of the park opened on an excellent road; the manor sufficiently abounded with game. Fox-hounds and harriers were kept in the neighbourhood. There was good coursing-ground in the open fields, belonging to the proprietor of the estate; and a river ran through the domain, affording good trolling for pike, at which Frank Raby had become an adept by the instructions of Jack Perren, who, by the permission of Mr. Raby, was now become his keeper. But the *agrémens* of Farndon Hall are not yet all told. One of the best female cooks that London could furnish was put into his kitchen, and a good stock of the choicest wines into his cellars. That he had a choice set of customers for the produce of each of these essentials to true epicurean enjoyment, it is scarcely necessary to make apparent.

It having been on the first of May following the decease of his uncle, that our hero took possession of Farndon Hall, some account of his proceedings there may be looked for. We will begin with him in his stable-yard, our fancy directing us thither, in accordance with our own taste. Of his hunters, not much can be said. Unprovided with accommodations for summering them agreeably to the plan he had adopted in the preceding spring, and which he found to answer so well, they were in their old quarters at Amstead, under the care of his head groom, who had *nearly* convinced the Scotch steward that the expenses of the preceding summer had not been thrown away upon them, by the superior condition of the stud, and the way in which they had stood their work, without disease of any kind having attacked them. Let us, then, take a peep into the coach-stables.

The space of a few months, even with the aid of both judgment and experience, is far too little for the selection of such a stable of coach-horses as Frank Raby had got together, consisting of seven greys—for, like Camillus[1] of old, that was his favourite colour—one black, and two chestnut piebalds, which gave him two teams, and two horses to spare, called, on the road, 'rest horses.' Indeed, no man can depend on having one team out of four, or two out of eight horses; and on these matters our hero had been well tutored by Sir John Inkleton. Sir John, indeed, had in part assisted him in the purchase of those nags, as had also a celebrated London dragsman, who selected some of them out of his employer's yard, money having tempted him to part with them. And, in truth, there is no much better method for gentlemen to adopt, in purchasing horses for their own driving, than to select them from regular road work, inasmuch as, in the first place, their character can be tried for goodness; and in the next, they are thoroughly broken-in to face all kinds of objects they may meet—the want of which confidence, in pleasure horses, is the cause of half the accidents which occur. This being a period when horse-flesh was at a premium, the above ten horses were considered not badly bought at £900, especially so as there were three fancy-coloured ones in the lot; but had not four of them been, to a slight degree, collar-marked, a larger sum would have been required. Frank Raby, however, had remembered the good advice his friend Sir John had given him in very young days; and in this, as well as in most of the future transactions of life, he looked to the main chance, and endeavoured to get what is called—'the penny's worth for his penny.' It would be well, if all persons, situated as he was situated—with the means of procuring all reasonable pleasures—would observe the like rule.

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[1] History informs us, that Camillus gave great offence to the Romans, by being carried through Rome in his chariot, drawn by four grey horses; no general, either before or since, having done the same: grey horses were then held sacred.

But to return to the coach-stables (as those in which coach-horses are kept are called, to distinguish them from those used by hunters, the establishments being invariably kept apart in all well-conducted arrangements): I can do nothing in illustration of them, if I may be allowed so to express myself, without the assistance of some friends. We will, therefore, announce to our readers the arrival of the following conspicuous characters, on a week's visit to our hero, who had made the most ample preparation for their reception; namely, Lord Edmonston; Sir John Inkleton; Mr. Somerby; Mr. Goodall; Mr. Houghton; friend Hargrave; and Jack Webber; and no sooner had they all assembled, and partaken of some refreshment after their journey, than they walked into the stable-yard, where the following conversation ensued:—

Sir John.—'Ah! there is your drag, and it appears to be quite the thing, or "all-right," as we say on the road. I told you Wright and Powell would turn you out a good one. What do you think of it, Jack, eh?'

Now, before we give the answer, we must have a word or two about 'Jack.' In consequence of his father having grumbled rather more than he thought was necessary, at having three times paid his debts—amounting, in all, to upwards of £72,000—the said Mr. John Webber quitted the paternal roof, and went regularly to work on the Brighton road for upwards of two years. A better coachman, perhaps, seldom mounted a coach-box; a more popular character, with all descriptions of persons, never; but he quitted it at the earnest request of his family, and was restored to society with no further blemish on his character than having performed the office of a menial to those vastly below him in the world.

But Jack had always this answer in his mouth, to any one who reminded him of this:—

> ‘Honour and shame from no condition rise;
> Act well your part—*there all the honour lies:*’

concluding in the more humble language of prose, with declaring that he believed he could say what no other road coachman in England could say; namely, that he not only never upset his coach, but that *he put every shilling he received on the bill.* We will now give his answer, apologising for this interlude:

Jack Webber.—‘I see very little to find fault with. The box appears to sail well over your wheelers, so as to put you near enough to your leaders to have them well in your hand, and to give them a taste of the whip when they want it; and the axletrees and boxes seem strong and good. Perhaps two inches less length of perch would have made her follow better, but I daresay you have plenty of strength in your harness, and she is safer on her legs as she is. The foot-board is capital; there is nothing like a roomy foot-board, not slanting too much, to give a man a good firm seat on his box, and full command of his team. It is disgusting to see a man sitting on a coach-box with his knees bent as if he were sitting on a low stool.’

Sir John.—‘I quite agree with you, Jack. The drag looks like business, and, if I mistake not, belongs to a very business-like fellow, for I think that our friend Raby will make a right good coachman in time.’

Jack Webber.—‘How can he fail in being so, when one Sir John Inkleton was his tutor?’

Sir John.—‘Thanks for the compliment, Jack: now let us look at the horses.’ On entering the stable in which the ten horses before-mentioned stood, all as clean as they could be made by the aid of four stout helpers, at the expense of at least five shillings’-worth of soap, ‘Upon my word, Frank,’ continued Sir John, ‘you have made the best use of your time. Business again,—eh, Jack?’

Jack Webber.—‘Good sort of stock, upon my word; plenty of strength on short legs. Ah, here’s an old friend of mine. I drove that black piebald for three months as leader in my coach, and a capital leader he is.’

Frank Raby.—'Then why was he sold?'

Jack Webber.—'For two reasons. First, he fetched a good price from a young carpet-manufacturer in the Borough, who went down one day with me, and fell in love with him; secondly, he was a bad starter at one end of his ground. I would never keep a bad starter, if I horsed a coach. They are generally the best of cattle when once off, but they alarm passengers, and get the coach a bad name. That horse twice fell back with me, and once broke the main bar.'

Frank Raby.—'And what did he do with the carpet-manufacturer?'

Jack Webber.—'Frightened him out of his wits the first time he put him to his drag.'

Frank Raby.—'But did he not know he was a bad starter?'

Jack Webber.—'Oh no; he only saw him at the down change, where he always went off quietly.'

Hargrave.—'And how happened it that he would not start well at the up change?'

Jack Webber.—'We had a cruel scoundrel of a horse-keeper there who used to beat him with a broomstick, because he was rather ticklish to dress. Horses have better memories than we give them credit for.'

Hargrave.—'But why did he frighten the carpet-manufacturer, whose servants, perhaps, never beat him?'

Jack Webber.—'Why, they put him down to the bottom of the bit, whereas I always drove him to the cheek. And how has he been starting with you, Frank?'

Frank Raby.—'Rather queerly, the first time, because he did not like his side; but since I have changed it, nothing can be better. No one who knew anything about putting horses into harness would have put such a mouth as his anywhere but to the cheek. I would not take 100 guineas for him.'

Sir John.—'I remember just such an instance as that you have been relating of this horse, in a grey mare that went at wheel in the Worcester mail. At Bengeworth, she was very difficult to put to the coach at all; but at Worcester she would almost put herself to, and stand for half an hour. She had some reason, no doubt, for her dislike to Bengeworth.'

Frank Raby.—'How did they manage her at the down change?'

Sir John.—'When the other three horses were put to, the coachman and guard up, and the passengers all seated, she was brought quickly out of the yard, with scarcely time to look about her: the leading rein being passed through her turrets, and chucked to the coachman's hand, her traces were put over the roller-bolts, by two nimble horse-keepers, and away she started, with a rush.'

Jack Webber.—'What! not poled up?'

Sir John.—'Very seldom; the man who brought her up to her place would generally succeed in putting the pole-chain through the ring of her harness, and now and then hooking it: but nine times in ten it was not hooked until she had gone a mile or so, when, by easing the pace, the guard was enabled to do it.'

Frank Raby.—'And did she never get back on the splinter-bar, and kick?'

Sir John.—'Oh no; she was not one of that sort. All she wanted was to get away with the coach from the scene of her dislike, and the faster the better, for she was a capital bit of stuff. Then again she was in the hands of a first-rate coachman. In the hands of a *spoon*, she would have been dangerous.'

Frank Raby.—'Is he still at work? I should like to see him, if he is.'

Sir John.—'He is not; he is dying from the effects of hot rum-and-water.'

Jack Webber.—'More's the pity; but why was not that mare put before the bars, instead of at wheel?'

Sir John.—'She would not have that place, or it would have been the fittest for her, no doubt. I thought she did the mail harm with the public, and I told the proprietors I thought so; but she was too good to be drafted.'

Jack Webber.—'Well, Raby, as far as I can see of them, I think you have made no bad selection: but further cannot be said till we see them in harness, which I suppose we shall to-morrow. In the meantime let us look at your harness-room.'

Sir John.—'Well done, Frank; all appears to be right here. Two sets of road-harness for the drag: one for your chariot (for church and dinner-work, I presume): and one set for the break. Whose work is it, for it appears first-rate?'

Frank Raby.—'One set of road-harness and the pair-horse are from Whippy; the other set of the former from Laurie—the two best harness-makers in London, I believe—and that for the break was made in the village. I like to lay out money near at home, when I can; but there is no harness fit to be looked at, of country make.'

Jack Webber.—'You are quite right, Raby, and you have gone to a good market. And your whips?'

Frank Raby.—'From Crowther, of course. They cost a guinea each; devilish dear, to be sure; but they are so nicely turned out. They are the only crops I could ever find to stand wet weather without losing shape; and when the thong suits them, there is nothing like them for punishing when it is wanted.'

Jack Webber.—'I like your pads much. They are well stuffed, so as to cause no pressure on the back-bone, which sets a horse wrong.'

Sir John.—'Exactly so; there is a strong sympathetic feeling between the back-bone and the withers, and when a horse is pinched by his pad, his patience is often exhausted, and he makes an attempt to relieve himself. Being galled in the shoulder is a trifle to a pinch on the back or withers; and no doubt many a cockney's gig has been kicked to pieces from this cause, of which they have not been in the least conscious. I once had a proof of it. I drove a horse fourteen miles in a gig; and just as he was entering on the fifteenth—without the least provocation that I could discern—without a whip, rein, or even a fly touching him, he began to mill, and—to use a coaching phrase—a sack was wanted to bring home the gig. I luckily escaped, but my servant was a good deal hurt; and I found out that the cause of the disaster was the pad pressing on the back-bone, which was becoming very much inflamed.'

Frank Raby.—'Well, I think we have seen all we can see for the present; and as the dressing-bell has rung, we had better walk towards the house. I never keep dinner waiting if I can avoid it, for it is unfair towards the cook; let us then——'

Jack Webber.—'One moment longer! Just let me look into your tool-box—a most necessary thing to keep the drag moving. I should have been hung up many times on those

Brighton South Downs, but for mine. Let me see.—Here is the screw-wrench; wheel and spring clips; two spring shackles, with bolts and nuts; two chains—one for a trace, when wanting, and the other shorter, with a ring at one end, and a hook at the other, in case of a tug giving way; but where is the little strap with two buckles?'

Frank Raby.—'The little strap with two buckles; I know not what you mean?'

Jack Webber.—'Then you know not a very useful appendage to the tool-box, inasmuch as, should any part of the reins, or indeed most parts of the harness, give way, it comes into use in a moment. I always carried two of them in my pocket, one somewhat broader and stronger than the other.'

Frank Raby.—'Just describe this strap.'

Sir John.—'*I* can do that for you, as I am never without one of them in the pocket of my greatcoat. It need not be more than six inches long, but must have a strong buckle at each end. Anything, then, in the shape of a strap being broken, can be instantly made serviceable by punching two holes, if none are ready within reach, to receive the tongues of the buckles.'

Somerby.—'But, Raby, where are the hunters?'

Frank Raby.—'They are at Amstead, in paddocks, which I had made for them last year; but against next spring I hope to have the means of summering them here, under my own eye.'

Hargrave.—'My horses are treated after your plan this summer, and I expect the greatest benefit from it, next season.'

Frank Raby.—'Depend upon it you will not be disappointed. I had a remarkable proof of the superiority of condition attained by it, in the course of a run in the last season. We came to a check at the end of a sharp burst, when some one observed—"What a steam there was from the horses!" "There is no steam from *mine*," said I; neither was there: in fact, he was beginning to get dry on his neck.'

Hargrave.—'It *must* be a great advantage to a hunter not to sweat much—or, at all events, to become soon cool; as exhaustion must be proportionably diminished.'

At six o'clock precisely—there were no eight o'clock dinners at this period, in the summer months, in the country—our party sat down to just such a dinner as we *may* imagine our young sportsman to have given them—not of the first quality, for the *chef de cuisine* was wanting, but such as no English gentleman could find fault with. Neither were the wines in the highest order for drinking, although all were excellent of their sort, *time* not having been allowed for their recovering themselves, after their transport from London and Dublin—the claret having been imported from the latter city. Everything, however, in the shape of liquids, that could be improved by it, was iced, even to the home-brewed small beer—no very contemptible beverage to travellers who had been exposed to a midsummer sun.

It was the fashion in those days to drink toasts in all private parties, among sportsmen especially: and the third given this evening—that is to say, the one following the King, and fox-hunting, was—'THE ROAD!' As may be supposed, it gave rise to some conversation on the subject, of which the following is the substance:—

Sir John.—'Well, Frank, I must say that, from what I have to-day seen of your coaching establishment, I am inclined to think you will make a very good start on the road—that is to say, if the cattle are to your liking.'

Lord Edmonston.—'I think so, too; but you will pay dear for your whistle. I understand the expenses of a complete driving establishment, to the same extent as yours, are calculated at £1200 a year, at least.'

Sir John.—'I can confirm that by my own experience. Mine costs me a little more than that sum, including what I give away annually to road coachmen and guards.'

Lord Edmonston.—'You are the Mæcenas of guards and coachmen, I understand, Inkleton. At all events, your name is known to all that I have ever come in contact with, and on all roads.'

Sir John.—'I do what I can for them: I think that, when they conduct themselves properly, they are a very deserving set of men, and are not so well remunerated as they ought to be, considering the wear and tear of life inseparable from their calling, and the risks they incur of accidents. I do not grudge what they get from me, because I have seen much improvement amongst them, on my road, from the notice I have taken of them. They are aware that good conduct is their only passport to my favour.'

Lord Edmonston.—' And is it true, Inkleton, that the expenses of a stud of twelve hunters and two hacks, at Melton, amount to £1200 per annum ? '

Sir John.—' As nearly so as possible—I mean the stud only; that sum extends not beyond the stable-yard ; it has nothing to do with the house expenses of their owner.'

Goodall.—' Why, Frank, £2500 a year for horses only ! It will make a big hole in the £5000 a year, eh ? We shall be having another journey together into the city, if the Squire of Amstead lives to be as old as my father is, eh ? '

Frank Raby.—' Thanks for the hint, Goodall, although it smells a little of the *shop.* But you forget that all the money my poor uncle left me, is at my disposal, so that if, during my father's life—which I hope may be a long one—I should overshoot the mark, I must trespass a little on the principal. And that won't matter much, for I daresay I shall never marry. Besides, I have given orders for the sale of that little estate in Hertfordshire, which is only fit for a cockney; and I daresay that, from its pretty situation, and by the help of one of Robins's best puffs, it will fetch £10,000. That would give me another £1000 a year, as I shall sink the principal in an annuity for my life. I don't *mean* to run in debt; and Inkleton says, if I do as he does—keep an account of my expenses, and pay ready money for most of the articles consumed, I shall never hurt myself. And you know I have no taste for gambling.'

Lord Edmonston.—' Not for a little racing, Frank ? '

Frank Raby.—' Why, I intend having a *shy* at that, as we used to say at Eton; but, having been once caught, I shall be cautious.'

Hargrave.—' Better stick to hounds and the coach-box. There are such a number of d——d rogues on the Turf, that I think you will do no good on that ground. Remember what Fairfax told you at Christchurch. There are not many better judges, I believe, than his father is, but he is *minus* £100,000 by the Turf, which is awful to think of, especially when one considers into what worthless hands a great portion of it is gone.'

Frank Raby.—' The legs ! '

Hargrave.—'Yes; what chance would you or any other gentleman have in betting with men who pay annually large sums to trainers for information as to trials, etc.? A dead loss, depend on it, Frank.'

Jack Webber.—'I think so, too Stick to the box and the pigskin, Frank, and don't put it in the power of those fellows to ruin you first, and laugh at you afterwards, as they have done by poor Raymond. I understand he has lost his last shilling, and is at this time in prison.'

Frank Raby.—'For a heavy sum?'

Jack Webber.—'I know not for what amount, but——'

Sir John.—'Well, let us drop this subject, and have a little coaching talk. Give us your opinion, Jack, of what a coach-horse should be. You have not only a good eye to shape and make, but your two years' constant work must have given you an advantage over us amateurs—even over one of such long standing as mine, for I have been at it, now, better than eight years.'

Jack Webber.—'The first requisite in a coach-horse is action. The second, substance, because horses draw by their weight and not by the mere force of their muscles, but action is necessary to perpetuate this force. Thirdly, good legs and feet, with power and breeding equal to the nature and length of the ground or stage on which they are to work. Lastly, wind. Without good wind all the other properties are of no avail in a coach-horse required to go fast; for, let its strength be what it may, it will not avail much after the first five miles, if he have not good wind. A good winded coach-horse will always keep up his condition, because he is never distressed on any reasonable length of ground. Sound legs and feet are very necessary for wheel-horses, especially on hilly roads: but I have driven many a good and safe-footed, bad-legged leader, which has been a free worker, running well up to his bit. I consider fifteen hands two inches to be the best size for a horse for light coaches and quick work; but would prefer sixteen hands for heavy coaches and slow work.'

Frank Raby.—'You have said nothing of the mouth.'

Jack Webber.—'Oh, we must take mouths as we find them, in regular work. We like what we call "cheek horses," when we can get them, but we manœuvre them in the best way we can, when we find them queer: and with the help of check-reins, side-reins, nose martingales, curb-chain in the mouth, altering the coupling reins, and such like, we generally bring them to our hands. But in regular work, mouth in a coach-horse is of not so much consequence, because he is always running home, and knows his ground. For gentlemen's work, mouth is everything, on account of the turning and twisting to which they are subject. Gentlemen's horses should play with their bits, and not be afraid of them: and each side of their mouths should be equal. When this is the case, the higher their courage the safer they are to drive, because, when running fearlessly up to their bits, they feel every motion of their coachman's hand. Of all teams, the most difficult to drive is that in which there are two good and sufficiently free workers, one slug, and a raking (fretful) leader.'

Sir John.—'You are right, Jack; it is a regular teazer. Let us have your science on that point.'

Jack Webber.—'As regards the "raker," you shall—the science that was given to me by the best and quickest man on his box that I have ever yet seen. "Something must be done," said he, "to keep him from killing himself. Try a check-rein to his partner: if that won't check him, it will bring his partner up to him, and that is something gained. If you attempt to pull him back by his bit, do it gently; if violently, you pull him back on his bar, which only makes him worse. The best way is, when there is no check-rein used, to bring him back by his harness: that is, to keep the wheel-horses back, so that he may feel *the collar and his bit* at the same time, which will tend to soothe his temper." Then he taught me another move, which I have ever since practised. "When a whole team are overdoing it," said he, "don't draw all your reins through your fingers at the same moment. By doing so, your horses' mouth (*i.e.* the proper feeling of them, which you may have taken some trouble to acquire) will very often be lost. The following is a better plan:—Open the fingers of your right hand, and put the reins into them, and with a good gripe, about two inches in front of your left hand, and then catch them again with your left hand, by passing it in front of your right. You then have their mouths just as they were, with only a stronger pull upon them." He also gave me the following hints, which I never lost sight of:—"The powers of a horse in fast work, and with a heavy load," said he, "can be measured to a mile. He may be very good for seven or eight miles, but bad for ten or twelve. The priming, indeed, is soon taken out of most of them, with a heavy load, and they must be looked to. Wheelers have the hardest place everything considered, as they are at work up hill and down; nevertheless, they must chiefly regulate the speed, by keeping them up to the leaders, instead of forcing the leaders to get away from them: in fact, if favour be shown, it should be to the leaders. You may drag a tired wheeler home, and he can shift a little in his work; but if a leader cuts it, you are planted—add to which, the wheel-horses are generally the strongest of the team. Always put your freest leader on the nearest side, as you will have him better in hand than if he were on the other. If a leader is weak, and cannot take his bar, tie up the wheeler that follows him, and it will place him by the side of his partner. Leaders should be fast trotters: when cantering or galloping, the bars are never at rest, consequently, much of the draught is lost in the angles they describe."'

Frank Raby.—'Do you like throat-latching coach-horses?'

Jack Webber.—'Not always. I think wheelers are better with more liberty than they have when throat-latched, and many horses will pull and fret in the throat-latch, but go quietly out of it; they do not like the confinement of it. Dealing with horses' mouths, in harness, to make them work pleasantly and equably, is no easy task. Some will not face a curb; on others it appears to make very little impression. It is difficult to handle a tender-mouthed leader. His coupling-rein must be at the cheek, or——'

Frank Raby.—'Why not drive him in a snaffle, at once?'

Jack Webber.—'A snaffle is not safe: in case of a bolt, or a drop, you cannot be sure of catching a horse up quickly, at that distance from the hand. He should have good liberty in his bearing-rein, and his curb-chain should be slack. But, of all mouths, a dead mouth is the worst. In this case, put the bearing-rein to *the top of the bit* (not the cheek), and the coupling-rein to the lowest loop in the bit, which creates a counter-action; and not only makes the bit of more service, but keeps the mouth in play. This appears a severe remedy, but such is the danger attending dead-mouthed horses, that we must not be too scrupulous on that head.'

Frank Raby.—'One of my wheel-horses is playful, and has twice kicked over his trace. Should I work him in a kicking-trace?'

Jack Webber.—'No, it is not necessary; what is called a hip-strap is sufficient, by which the trace is lifted up as the horse lifts himself; thus he cannot jump over it. It is not an ornament to your harness, having rather a slow appearance; but it looks better than a kicking-trace, and, unless with a really vicious horse, answers all ends.'

Sir John.—'Were you ever hung up, Jack, on the Brighton ground, for I know you loaded well, and there are some sharp hills on it?'

Lord Edmonston.—'*Hung up!* What are you talking about? I think if Jack had been hung up for a very few seconds, we should not have had him here, for his weight would soon have——'

Jack Webber.—'Choked him in his collar, you were going to say. Being hung up, in coaching phraseology, means being brought to a standstill, from one cause or another. I have never been quite fast: but having had my share of high-blowers and soft-hearted ones, I have now and then found it difficult to keep my time. With horses of this description, I have always found it answer to keep them from their collar, and let them only carry their harness, for a few hundred yards, when they recover themselves. A little watching and nursing was necessary at all times on our road, as we were not capitally horsed.'

Goodall.—'How very fat some of the horses are which run out of London.'

Jack Webber.—'So much the better; good flesh is not an obstacle to going the pace; and no horses on the road look so well as what are called the London horses; their stables are warm; they have the best of hay and corn, and are under the eye of a sharp-eyed foreman, who knows his business well.'

Frank Raby.—'I suppose, Jack, you are all for the long-wheel reins?'

Jack Webber.—'No one, south of Trent, is now seen driving with any other. They are much the safest and most business-like: the mouths of wheel-horses cannot be felt as they should be felt, with the short wheel-rein.'

Hargrave.—'Do you think it is injurious to a hunter to drive him occasionally in light harness?'

Jack Webber.—'By no means, provided his legs and feet are good; much better do that than send him to grass, to become full of bad flesh.'

Somerby.—'I am no coachman, but I often go from Melton to London on the box of the mail, and one thing puzzles me. I often see the traces of a wheel-horse appear slack, and still the coachman is satisfied with the working of the horse. How is that, Mr. Webber?'

Jack Webber.—'I will explain it in two words. If a trace be twisted, it will never appear to be "taut," as the sailors say; but a coachman knows when a horse is at work, by a certain tension of his frame.'

Hargrave.—'Will you tell me the best way to put horses into harness the first time '

Jack Webber.—'You mean double harness.'

Hargrave.—'I do.'

Jack Webber.—'Then I will give you the directions which were given to me by one of the best judges of everything that belongs to an amateur coach-box, at this time in England. It is best to put a young horse in, *the first time*, with only one other, which should be steady, good collared, and quick. A great deal of room should be given him in his head, and he should be driven at the cheek of an easy bit, with his pole-piece rather slack. He should be started very quietly, making the old horse take collar first; and the first start should be in a wide space of ground, so that he may be allowed to go any way he pleases, without being checked. If he is alarmed, and inclined to bounce or bolt, he should not be held hard, and on no account stopped; for, if he is, he may not like to start again—particularly if high-mettled. The old horse will hold him, so as to prevent his running far. If a young horse is shy of his collar—as most are—he should not be pressed at first, as he may take a dislike to it, and become a jibber. If not forced, they will generally take to it of their own accord. When a young coach-horse is stopped, it should be done very gradually—allowing at least ten yards to do it in; for if it is attempted to stop him short, he will resist, and then *he is drawing by his head*. For the same reason, coach-horses should not be held too hard when descending hills, which is a fault many coachmen have. They forget the great additional weight they are throwing upon them, as they are then drawing by their heads. When a young horse is first put to a coach, he should be very carefully turned to the pole, so as to prevent its touching his hind quarter, which might cause him to kick. When he has been driven long enough to make him steady, he should be taken up in his bearing-rein, and put lower on his bit, and driven in a wide circle, or figure of eight—keeping the inner horse well up to his collar and bit. In his breaking he should be frequently stopped, and not held after he is pulled up, as, if he is high-mettled, it will make him restless, and, if dull, he will not require it. Great care should be taken, at starting, to make the old horse begin first, if the young one be inclined to be hot, as it will prevent him from plunging. If he is dull, and not ready to start when the word of command is given, he should feel the whip till he answers it. If inclined to kick, he should be taken up very short in his pole-piece, and his bearing-rein tightened: a stroke of the whip *over the ears* is also useful—a kind of punishment that, in my opinion, should never be inflicted *but for vice*. It is a brutal practice, and one which I never had recourse to myself, except in the case of a kicker. Young horses should have their heads a good deal at liberty. Throat-latching a young horse, either wheeler or leader, shows great want of judgment. Some will go more quietly as leaders than at wheel, the reason for which I conceive to be, their not liking to find themselves confined by the pole-piece. All young horses should have their sides frequently changed.'

Hargrave.—'Thank you kindly, Jack, for your good and practical advice. I will only trouble you to decide a dispute lately in my presence, as to what description of road is easier of draught?'

Jack Webber.—'I can settle that point for you on the authority of a very scientific man, and you will be surprised at the result. The draught of a horse in harness is thus calculated. On good pavement—33 lb.; on broken stone surface—65 lb.; on broken stone, hard bound—45 lb.; on loose gravel—147 lb.! This accounts for the London mail, and also that which runs to Manchester from Chester, having only three horses for the first twenty or thirty miles, the road being paved. As coachmen say, when describing the *vis virida* of the mechanic, a coach running over pavement is always *alive*. In fact, she jumps from stone to stone, whereby her motion is accelerated.'

Lord Edmonston.—'As for coaching, as you gentlemen of the whip express yourselves, I know nothing of it practically, and we should not attempt what we do not understand. We have a good hint on this subject in the fable of Icarus, and Persius tells us that, if a ploughman were to take the helm of a ship, the gods would leave him to his fate. I repeat, then, that I know nothing of "coaching," but I see no reason why English gentlemen, who can afford to do it, may not indulge themselves in driving their own coaches.'

Goodall.—'It is an old fashion—Lateranus, the Roman consul, drove his own chariot.'

Lord Edmonston.—'Yes, but only by night, until the year of his office was out.'

Goodall.—'In Greece it was the amusement of kings: Philip of Macedon had his chariot victories engraved on his coins; and Alcibiades had as many coach-horses in training as Lord Grosvenor has racers; and, be it remembered that the fire of Pindar's muse, which dazzled all Greece, shone forth in honour of coachmen, jockeys, wrestlers, and prize-fighters.'

Sir John.—'I remember he tells us that Pelops broke his arm hitting a near leader in his race with Œnomaus. But, jesting apart, we have taken some of our notions on the coach-box from the "old ones," as we called the ancients, at Eton. For example, when I saw Angus the other day, in the park, cutting a figure of eight with his four-in-hand, I was convinced he was thinking of that beautiful passage in the *Æneid*, where the sudden and artful turns, which the goddess Juturna gave to her brother's chariot to avoid the pursuit of Æneas, are compared to the flight of the swallow, when seeking food for her young.'

Goodall.—'And you have them again, in the use of the word "artful." When Peyton was complimenting little Joe, as he who drives the Exeter mail out of London is called, on his being so good a coachman, for so small a man, he answered him thus:—"I'll tell you how it is, Sir Harry; *what the big ones does by strength, I does by hartifice.*" Now did not Nestor say the very same thing when he was giving instructions to his son how to drive his chariot, when contending for the prize at the funeral games of Patroclus; and where, although the worst horsed of the lot, he was only beaten by a length? For myself, although no coachman beyond driving my father's curricle, I like to listen to these discussions by men who understand the thing well, and none others are worth listening to. If Æschylus had not bled on the plains of Marathon, he could not have celebrated on the stage the triumphs of his country.'

Sir John.—'There is no small degree of mechanical science, as well as knowledge of the laws of motion, to be learnt in our line, eh, Jack?'

Jack Webber.—'Indeed, Inkleton, there is; and many a life has been lost for the want of such knowledge—in descending hills, and turning corners, especially. If they were aware how motion is accelerated by the continuance of the impetus in one case, and in the other, that,—as by the laws of nature, all bodies put in motion by one power will proceed in a straight line, unless compelled to change their course by some force impressed,—any sudden deviation from that course disturbs the centre of gravity in proportion to its suddenness, they would be more careful than they are. I could have told you all about these matters when I left Cambridge; but when I used to see a passenger on my coach amusing himself with watching the shot from the fore-wheel, which, on certain parts of our road, would rise to a considerable height, whilst I was springing them, I would say to myself, "that fellow little thinks he is taking a lesson in conic-sections, and that the parabola and their properties, which those bits of dirt are describing, are the foundation of gunnery."'

Frank Raby.—'Why, Jack, you are becoming scientific.'

Jack Webber.—'Not much of that; but if some cleverer fellow than myself were to put these few points before road coachmen, in plain English, and in a small tract, published at a low price, the travelling public would be great gainers.'

Houghton.—'Whilst on the subject of science, I wish a pathometer could be used to enable us to judge of the sufferings of horses in coaches that travel so fast, and in which long stages are run with very indifferent horses.'

Jack Webber.—'I think the suffering of coach-horses is becoming less every year. In the first place, they are of a better description of horse than formerly, which very much reduces it; secondly, they are much higher fed; and, lastly, stages are much shortened. We have now but few twelve-mile, and no fourteen-mile stages. I have heard my father say that, when he went to Rugby School, there was a team on the Coventry and London road, called "The twenty milers." They went from the "Blue Boar," on Dunsmore Heath, to the "Black Lion," at Towcester—just twenty miles.'

Houghton.—'The "Blue Boar" and the "Black Lion"! who ever heard of either, except in the imagination of a madman?'

Jack Webber.—'We may as well ask, who ever saw a *white* lion or a unicorn, the latter one of the supporters of our crown. For my part I never could find out any one who could tell me what is *meant* by the word *unicorn.* It cannot be an animal with one horn, because we read in scripture of the horns of the unicorn.'

Houghton.—'I believe it to have been a kind of rhinoceros, whose history is not given us in scripture, but mentioned by Moses, as having the strength of God; or an animal called the reem, which is spoken of by Job as an unmanageable animal, of great strength, but one which refused to bend its neck to the yoke.'

Jack Webber.—'No bad type of John Bull, we must allow; and may the gods preserve me from a unicorn team, which I once drove for three months. But as we call a one-eyed horse, "single-peeper," should not a one-horned rhinoceros be called, *monoceros?*'

Frank Raby.—'You are becoming facetious, Jack; suppose you give us another song.'

Jack Webber.—'With all my heart; and as you have been speaking of Moses, I will give you one about Adam:—

PARODY ON THE 'OLD ENGLISHMAN.'

"Old Adam was the first-born man, as everybody knows—
He never paid a tailor's bill, because he wore no clothes;
Nor fine kid gloves upon his hands, as you may well suppose,
Nor dandy collar round his neck, nor shoes to hide his toes.

Chorus:—For Adam was a gentleman, one of the olden time.

He neither rent nor taxes paid, nor *duns* came to his door,
For he had enough of meat and drink, and some left for the poor;
For the poor were not then born, nor either were the great,
No rogues or thieves had he to fear, so he never lock'd his gate.

For Adam, etc.

His wife his dinner cook'd each day, of good fat roast and boil'd,
And oftentimes, for want of fire, his dinner it got spoil'd ;
And he would have had it cook'd by gas, but he could not afford—
And from Oldham had his coals, but the pits were not then bored.

For Adam, etc.

He led a very happy sort of comfortable life,
And never quarrelled with any one, except 'twas with his wife ;
And she durst trust him out at nights, for so some people say ;
Nor was she ever once afraid that he would go astray.

For Adam, etc.

And Eve, unlike our women now, in bows and frills ne'er drest,
Nor ever drank or gin or tea—now was not Adam blest?
Her neighbours she ne'er scandalised, nor treated them with scorn,
She was the pink of women then, because none else were born.

For Adam, etc.

Old Adam ne'er example took by other people's ways,
Nor ever went to routs or balls, to concerts or to plays ;
For concert-rooms and playhouses, they were not built then,
And Eve was never once accused of flirting with the men.

For Adam, etc.

At last poor Adam's days had run their course, and then, poor man, he
Nor was there even one stood weeping by his bed-side ; [died,
Without a good oak coffin they laid him in his clay,
Nor were they afraid of body-snatchers stealing him away.

For Adam, etc." '

Frank Raby.—' Well done, Jack ! you sing like a nightingale, and the sight of your good-humoured face adds much to your melody. We will have one more bottle of claret, a rubber at whist, in the other room, and to bed in good time—a rule I mean to adopt in my house, to the best of my power to do so. It is written of Moses, of whom we have just been speaking, that at the age of 100 years, "his eye was not dim, neither was his natural force abated;" and as I hope to ride a-hunting at fourscore, at least, I mean to keep early hours, as no doubt Moses did.'

Jack Webber.—' But, as a sportsman, if you wish to be old, you must not regard *all* that Moses tells you. For example: he says, "thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, *as of linen and woollen together.*" Now, who can expect to hunt and shoot, in this country, without suffering from rheumatism, if he do not wear flannel under his shirt; as for myself I should have been frozen as stiff as the kitchen poker, many a night during the frost of last winter but one, if I had not been allowed to roll myself up in flannel.'

Frank Raby.—'Moses lived in a warm climate, Jack.'

The first step after breakfast, in a young sportsman's house, is to the stables, a custom which was not departed from by the party at Farndon-house; and when, on entering it, four vacant stalls were observed, Jack Webber exclaimed:

'Hey-day, Frank! what is become of your skewbald team?' meaning the one to which the chestnut piebald belonged.

'They went last night to the "Barley Mow," twelve miles from hence, to take us on to Townley Park, twelve miles further, to call on that excellent fellow, as well as capital sportsman and coachman, Peyton, in whose stables you will see a good stud of both hunters and coach-horses, all in right keeping. He knows that we are coming, so that he will give us a good luncheon, a bowl of bishop to wash it down with, and we shall pick up Jem Powell on the road, who will amuse us as we toddle along.'

'Who is Jem Powell?' inquired Goodall.

'I am surprised at the question,' said Jack Webber; 'I should just as soon have expected a man to ask who is George III. Jem is one of the oldest and best coachmen on the Holyhead road, and a very clever fellow to boot. Indeed, he says of himself, that if he had had a college education, his place would have been *before* the bars, and not behind them, by which he means a first-class degree.'

'No doubt he would,' observed our hero; 'for I never heard him express himself but with point, on any one occasion; and there is a dry humour in his remarks that gives them additional weight.'

As the clock struck eleven, our party commenced their drive, Jack Webber on the box with his host; Sir John behind him on the roof; and the rest where their fancy placed them; and this being the first time of Sir John seeing his pupil at work on his own coach, he was not a little interested by the event. All went well, however. Frank Raby gave proof that he had not lost sight of the instructions he had received from Jack Bailey, when at Eton, nor from himself during the vacations; and he was at once pronounced, both by the Baronet and Jack Webber, as only requiring one more year's experience, to make him a first-rate coachman. His hand on the horses was light; his temper was not to be ruffled, although it was occasionally put to the test, by a wheeler not working to please him; he descended rather a steep hill without having recourse to the skid, and yet with very little pressure on the wheelers, and he showed himself a judge of pace, by keeping his time to half a minute, having allowed himself an hour and ten minutes to do the twelve miles.

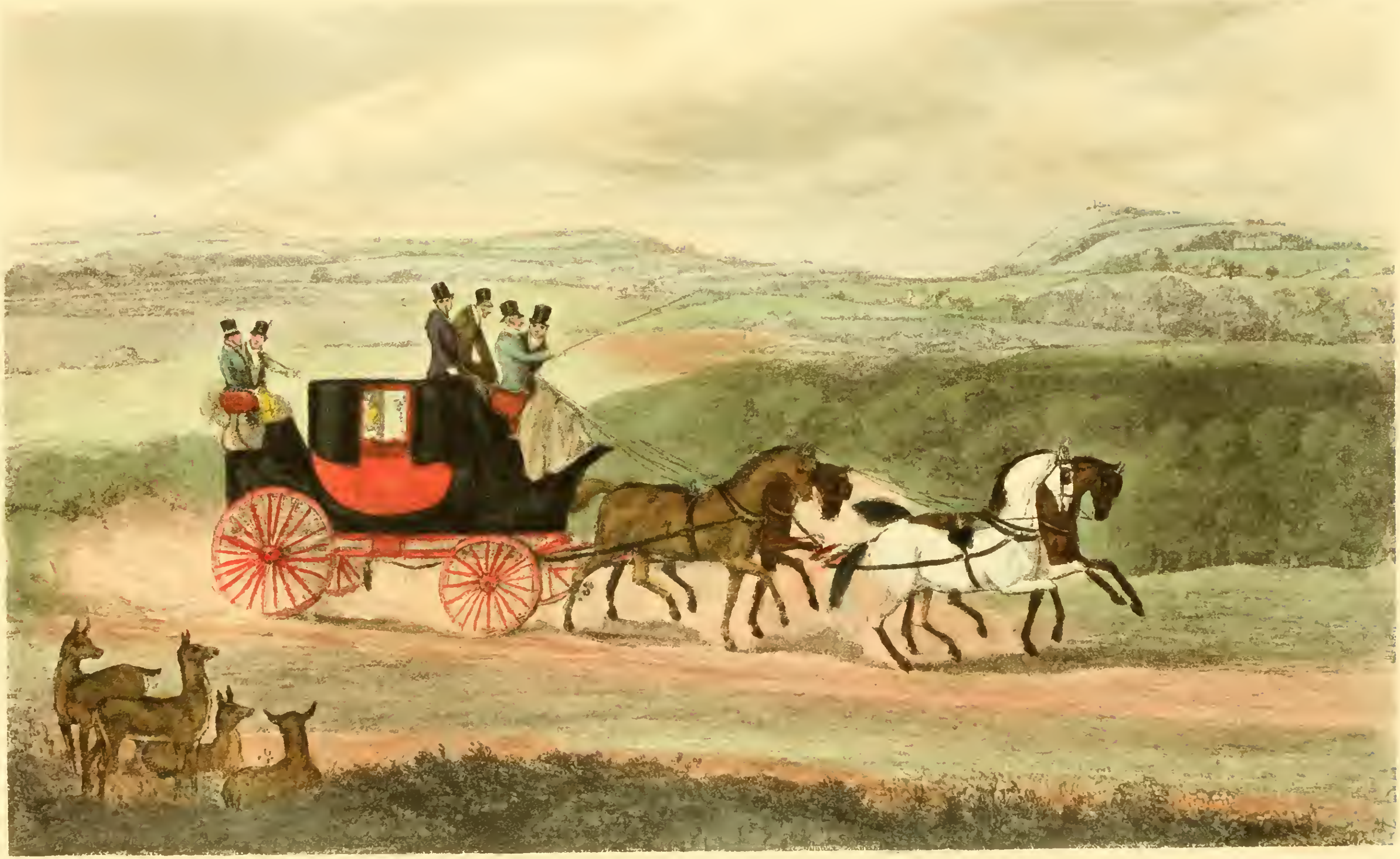
At the change—the well-known 'Barley Mow'—stood the equally well-known Jem Powell, looking over the fresh team, which were standing in readiness at the door, and he thus saluted the party when they pulled up:

'Good-morning to ye, gentlemen; I hope I sees you all well. You have a fine morning for your drive; I hopes we shall find Sir Harry well. He is a worthy gentleman, and a good friend to us coachmen; and (looking at Sir John) here's another of the same sort. I hears of you, Sir John, and what you are doing for 'em on the north road. I am told you have made some on 'em mend their ways already. And now we are a-going to have another good gentleman amongst us in these parts, and God be thanked for him—of course I means the owner of these here horses: but I arn't a-going to say all I think on him before his face. And sure enough here is Mr. Hargrave and Mr. Webber. Why, Mr. Hargrave, I haven't seen you since you was at Christchurch, when I tried to make you a coachman, but you was terribly fond of those hounds, there was no making nothing on you in our line. As for the other gentlemen, I can't say as I knows them.'

'Then I'll introduce you to them,' said Frank Raby. 'This is Mr. Houghton, here is Mr. Goodall, and here is Lord Edmonston: the two first-named gentlemen you must have known before, Jem, for they were at Oxford.'

'No doubt, sir,' continued Jem, 'but not in our line. I am glad to see my Lord; I likes to have a Lord about my coach, it looks so respectable; and we have as good a one as any in England on our road, and a brother to one that the world cannot beat. I believe, on my soul, that he don't give away less than £400 a year to coachmen and guards, besides having several of them occasionally at his house, when they are sick.'

'You mean the Hon. Thomas Kington,' said Jack Webber,



The four-in-hand.

shaking Jem heartily by the hand; he is an out-and-outer, as we say of a capital leader, but only think of his being the son of a judge!'

'He is as good a judge in our line, as his father ever was in his,' said Jem, 'I don't think there is a steadier, better coachman in England than his Honour is.'

'I have heard a great deal of Mr. Kington,' said Lord Edmonston, 'but I never chanced to come across him.'

'Then, my Lord,' replied Jem, 'as the horses are put to, I haven't time to tell you half I knows of him, now, but as we goes along, I'll let you a bit into his history.'

'Are you all right?' cried Frank Raby, when he had seated himself comfortably on his box; and on the answer in the affirmative being given, away went the team, the skewbald leader taking to his collar without a single plunge, working admirably throughout, with the privilege of having the bar.

'Well,' said Jem; 'a prettier team than this no man would wish to sit behind.'

'And well turned out, eh, Jem?' said Webber.

'And well handled, too,' remarked Sir John.

Jem nodded assent—merely observing that he should be a better judge of that when they got to the top of a hill which was before them, nearly a mile long.

'But,' resumed Jem, 'I was a-going to tell you about that there Mr. Kington—His Honour, as the coachmen and guards all calls him on this road, and most others. Do you know, he works almost as regular as we poor servants do, keeping fourteen coach-horses in full employ. He drives to his country town, fifteen miles from his house, and back, four days in the week, and on some other road the other two, but, like me, he lays rest on a Sunday; that is to say, he only puts to a pair, and drives his family to church. They tells me there is not a poor man in distress in his parish, he is so kind to them all; and as to coachmen and guards, he has saved many of their souls as well as their bodies.'

'What do you mean by saving their bodies?' asked Lord Edmonston.

'Why, my Lord,' replied Jem, 'he saves 'em in two ways. First, although all the coachmen and guards which pass through his village have a glass of good ale, at the public, chalked up to His Honour, he advises them not to drink spirits, nor too much of anything. Then, again, if any of them meet with an accident, or are sick, or want a week's rest, his servants' hall and a good bed are open to them, till such times as they recover. His Honour would have made the best mail-coachman in England, for he keeps such capital time, even with his own coach. He won't wait a *moment* for nobody when his time is up; and do you know, my Lord, he once left his lady behind, to come home in a post-chaise, because she warn't to the time at the inn from which he starts. That's what I call being punctual. Then he goes through all the manœuvres that we regular coachmen go through. - When he drives into the yard, he walks into the office, hangs up his coat and whip, takes off his knee-caps and shawl, and then (what we can't do) walks out like a gentleman.'

At this moment a gentleman in black trotted past the coach, and on its being remarked by our hero, that Jem made him a most respectful salutation, he asked him his name.

'His name, sir!' answered Jem; 'why, I thought everybody knew Parson Smith—the cleverest parson in the country. They tells me that when he preaches the church is as full as a cockpit.'

'By the simile you have used,' observed Lord Edmonston, 'I presume you are given to cock-fighting.'

'Have been so, in a small way, all my life, my Lord,' replied Jem. 'And when we gets to Sir Harry's, he will show you, if you ask him, the picture of a favourite cock of mine, that won me six battles. It is painted on the dial-plate of a watch I gave the Baronet soon after he left college; and there are also pictures of a race-horse, a bulldog, and a greyhound on it, with my own ugly face in the centre.'

A good laugh, of course, followed this episode of Jem's, and, when it ceased, Lord Edmonston told him he was sorry to hear he was fond of so cruel a sport as cock-fighting. 'My friend, Mr. Raby, had a turn that way,' said his Lordship, 'but I am happy to say he now flies at nobler game.'

'Why, my Lord,' said Jem, 'I much fear there are no sports which you gentlemen takes delight in, that are not more or less cruel. I thinks as how I should have given up cock-fighting, had not a very clever gentleman of our University made me believe it is not at all cruel.'

'Do you recollect what arguments he made use of?' inquired Hargrave.

'Why,' answered Jem, 'if you can take them in my homely language, they were much after this fashion. He said he did not think cock-fighting equal as to cruelty to horse-racing, in which poor animals are forced, against their nature, to performances beyond their strength, with whips and spurs, which jockeys call, *cutting up*. And this *now* happens only a few months arter the poor sufferer has been taken from the side of its dam. But in the fighting of game-cocks, the case is different: for instead of a force against nature, it is an indulgence of nature.'

'Of natural propensities, you mean, Jem,' said Frank Raby.

'I shouldn't wonder,' resumed Jem; 'but this is my clumsy way of telling the story. "Cocks at their walks," he said, "and at full liberty, will *seek* each other for battle, as far as they can hear each other's crowing, and the putting spurs on their heels, when brought into the pit to fight, is quite contrary to cruelty, for the battle is sooner over, and what they suffer is nothing, or next to nothing, to what they would suffer, were they to fight with their own natural heels, bruising each other, in every tender part—killing each other, in short, by inches. Then here," he said, "is the comparison between the man who fights a duel, and him who fights for money in the ring. The one meets his man like the game-cock, of his own free will, and with artificial weapons: but the other is made to fight merely for the sake of money, and as he fights with natural weapons, he receives blows and bruises, almost to the point of death, just to amuse idle lookers-on, and for the purpose of gambling on the event."'

'Did your friend say anything about hunting?' asked Hargrave.

'Yes, Mr. Hargrave,' replied Jem, 'he compared it in one way to cock-fighting. "Hounds and greyhounds," said he, "are formed for the pursuit of their respective game: they are guided by nature."'

'By natural instinct, you mean, Jem,' interrupted Hargrave.

'Just so,' said Jem; 'they acts of their own accord, he told me; the whole is an indulgence of their natural propensities, as you call 'em.'

'But the game they hunt, what did he say of it?' continued Hargrave.

'Well, to be sure,' replied Jem, 'he said it must be anything but comfortable when the dogs are pursuing it, but its fate is soon settled, and there is no dying of wounds, as there is from shooting and fishing.'

'But the very fact of the game-cock being the noble animal he is,' said Lord Edmonston, 'is the reason why he should be restrained from fighting without a natural cause.

'Man may be considered as the delegate of Heaven over inferior creatures, but he has no right to torment them unnecessarily. Then observe the character of the cock, as he claps his wings before he crows; how proud, how courageous is his appearance! The very lion himself is *said* to fear him At all events, his graceful attitude and carriage, together with his high-beaming eye, rank him in the highest class of birds.'

'All very true,' said Hargrave; 'but without defending cock-fighting, will you show me the man who can account for that early instinct which impresses young animals with the notion of the situation and use of their natural weapons, and of even using them before they are properly formed, and at the same time can say, that the display of this instinct was not given them for some good purpose? I can only observe that the science of cock-fighting, if I may be allowed to call it so, is one of the most difficult, if not the most extraordinary of any connected with the animal system. Training the race-horse is A B C to it. Fancy an experienced feeder being able to discern to a nicety to what extent cocks of one particular breed will bear reducing in weight, and what those of another. Then one man shall make his cocks fight for three consecutive days with equal strength and spirit, whereas his competitor cannot keep his up to the mark beyond the second day. He will be at the height of condition one day, and retrograde rapidly the next. Again, what a strange phenomenon is this:—cocks, of the same blood, bred from a father and daughter, will run away, whilst those from a mother and son will stay to be killed piecemeal, and *vice versâ*! Lastly, their colour; how true to their feather are they preserved by the most eminent breeders—without the slightest deviation, indeed, for a great number of generations! There is a well-attested instance of this on record. An eminent breeder of game-fowls had preserved an invariable production of what are called black-breasted reds during fifteen years, but in the sixteenth he had several light piles in one hatch, or brood. *No change of eggs could have taken place*, nor was there a possibility of the access of any other cock to his hens. On looking back, however, he ascertained that, five years previously to his having his original breed out of Shropshire, there had been a cross of a Cheshire pile in the hens. Thus, it appears, the plumage had remained perfect for twenty-one years.'

'A most singular fact, undoubtedly,' said Lord Edmonston. 'But I understand the same phenomenon occasionally occurs in horses. I am told, that not only does the colour often go back to a very distant cross, but that a small dark-coloured spot on the hinder quarters of Eclipse is, to this day, entailed on some of his blood, although distant several generations from the original.'

'Similar phenomena,' observed Houghton, 'are observable in flowers. What florists call a "run flower," is one which has the inherent vice of changing colour, with little chance of regaining its primitive and valuable brilliancy. In a perfect flower, every leaf should be striped according to its class, whether flake or bizaune.'

'Well,' said Jem, 'I cannot talk with you gentlemen on these matters—because why, you know, I am no scholard, but there is one point you haven't touched upon, concerning cock-fighting. Mr. Hargrave here will tell you—for I have often seen him in a cockpit—that cocks show as much skill, in defence and attack, as the best prize-fighters of the day, and, like them, their blows have more or less force, according to their better skill. If a cock's legs are out of the direction of his body, we call him a dry-spurred or dry-heeled cock, because he can't hit to do much harm. He seldom carries death with his heels. On the contrary, if his legs are in a proper direction with his body, he stands erect, rises high, is a close hitter, and generally wins his battle, and in a short time too. Oh! it is a fine sight to see a set-to between two such cocks as this, and I wish I was sure it warn't cruel.'

'As for that, Jem,' said Hargrave, 'I fear we cannot divest it of a certain portion of cruelty. Although, to a thinking mind, nothing is more astounding than that early instinct which impresses young animals with the notion of the *situation* of their natural weapons, in the first place, and, in the next, of using them, even before they are properly formed—for a young cock will spur at his adversary before his spurs are grown out, and a calf, or lamb, will push or butt with their heads before their horns are sprouted—I fear we have no right wantonly to expose one animal to the fury of another. But so it will be to the end of time. That perfect calm, that uninterrupted felicity which some persons would wish to introduce into the world, is but a chimera—a beautiful one, I allow—but only appearing possible to those who judge of things according to their imagination alone; since every one who forms a cool judgment on the subject will see that the earth was never designed for such a state.'

'I do not quite agree with you, Hargrave,' observed Lord Edmonston; 'I think——'

'Beg pardon, my Lord, for interrupting you,' said Jem; and, touching our hero on the shoulder, thus quaintly addressed him: 'Beg pardon, Mr. Raby, but I should like to hear your bars rattle a little down this next hill. Excuse me, sir, but, on the last, you committed a fault which most young coachmen commit—you let your leaders *draw*, which of course makes it worse for your wheelers. Always let your bars rattle a little, going down hill.'

'That near leader over-pulls me,' said Frank.

'I observe he does,' replied Jem; 'pull his rein three inches through your hand, and grip it *tightly* with your thumb; and when your horses are on their collars, keep your wheelers up to him, and he will not pull you so much. But I'll alter his coupling-rein for you when we get to Sir Harry's.'

'That's right, Jem,' said Hargrave, 'let us have no more cocking at present; give us something on the road.'

'A little of your history,' added Lord Edmonston.

'Why, that will be rather a longish story, my Lord,' replied Jem; 'I think we had better leave it till we are on the road homewards. A little of Sir Harry's beef, and a glass or two of his good ale, will make my tongue run more glib.'

'Like a newly-greased wheel — eh, Jem?' said Jack Webber.

Arrived at Townley Park, they found the worthy Baronet expecting them, and with a really good luncheon on his dinner-table; for which a twenty-four miles' ride through the balmy air of a spring morning, added to the cheerful talk on the road, had given them a keen appetite. And by rather a curious coincidence, at the very moment at which they drove up to the door, another coach was to be seen at the farther end of the park, in which were four strapping brown horses, trotting away at the rate of, at least, twelve miles in the hour, with apparent ease to themselves, and in the hands of a perfect master of his art. This proved to be the splendid turn-out of Mr. Herson, a neighbour of Sir Harry, who chanced to call on him at that hour; and when it is stated that he gave 400 guineas for the leaders which he had this day at work, their fine appearance and paces can be very readily accounted for. But to the arrival of our hero and his party, which we will relate in the dialogical form, as saving some trouble:—

Sir Harry.—'Glad to see you on your own box, Raby; when you were last on mine, I thought you would not be long before you got to work. The old uncle cut up well, I find, and I rejoice to think that you have settled so near me, and on so good a road. How d'ye do, Inkleton? What, Jack Webber!—are you there, with your round and rosy face? I suppose you are giving the young one some instructions. But there is old Jem Powell there, I see; I beg his pardon, a thousand times, for supposing any man could act the schoolmaster *in his presence.* Glad to see you, Jem; how smart you are to-day! And Hargrave—delighted to see *you*; you are one quite after my own heart—fond of the box and hounds—a right good sportsman, and the best man out of Christchurch, in your time, out of the pigskin.'

Frank Raby.—'I believe, Sir Harry, I have three friends here to whom you are not known. Allow me to introduce to you Lord Edmonston, a most particular friend of mine, although not one of the best on the pigskin; also Mr. Goodall and Mr. Houghton, both Christchurch men, not much in our line at present, but first-class men in another.'

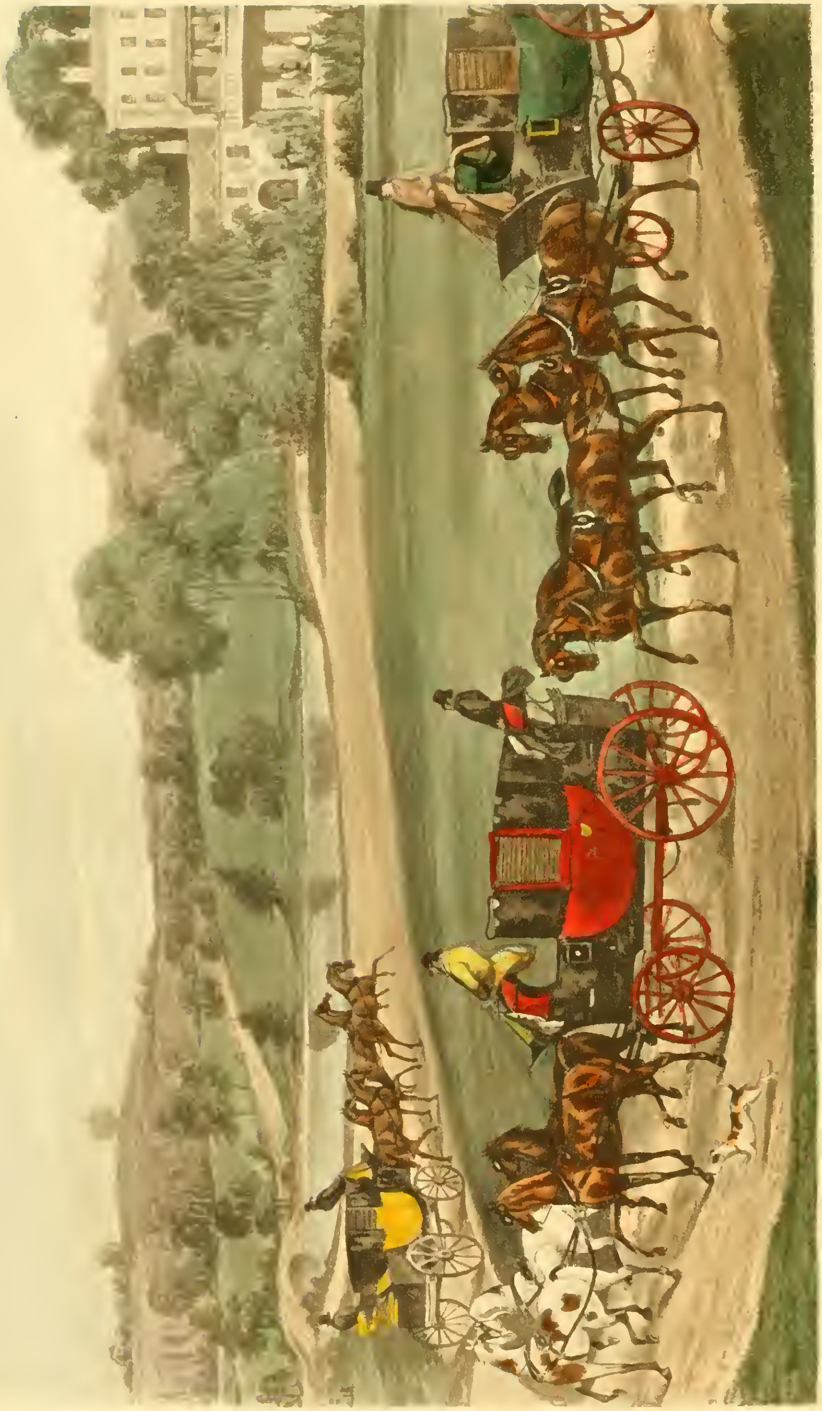
Sir Harry.—'Happy to see you all. Now let Jem take your coach into the yard, and himself into the servants' hall; a bit of venison pasty will do you all no harm after your drive, and

I have ordered a good bowl of "bishop." But here is Herson coming; you will now see the best and fastest team this day in England; and so they ought to be, for he has not a horse in his coach-stable that cost him less than a hundred, and he gave two hundred a-piece for the leaders he has in to-day. I know them at this distance, by their action.'

Five minutes, or less, brought this splendid team to the door. To some of this party Mr. Herson and his friends were known, and the usual introduction to the others being soon concluded, luncheon was the order of the day, and ample justice was done to it—by the Farndon party, especially. A walk to the stable-yard followed, which may be said to have been a matter of course, from the nature of the parties assembled, and the prevailing similarity of their tastes. The following may be relied upon for its contents:—

In the hunters' stables were seven first-rate horses, but not looking to advantage, being stripped of their clothing, and, in the language of the grooms of that day, 'put out of condition,' previously to being turned out for the summer, the Baronet not having quite relinquished the grazing system, although his stud remained abroad for a much less time than that of his neighbour did, and were allowed a certain portion of corn. They appeared to our hero to be just the sort of horses to carry thirteen stone, which they did carry, whilst under their owner, let the country or pace be what they may. In short, they were ridden by one of the first horsemen England ever saw. Amongst them was Watchmaker, the Baronet's favourite horse, and of which we have already spoken as having signalised himself on the Bosworth day, in one instance; in the struggle between the orange and red, in another; and also as having been depictured in the *Sporting Magazine*, in the act of taking a desperate leap, and setting the whole field. He was a grey gelding, sixteen hands high, of singularly fine form, and a delightful horse to ride over every description of ground.

The next thing that attracted the eye of the party was the Baronet's driving coach, which stood in the yard, with the bars on the head of the pole, greatcoats on the box, and behind; lamps in the irons, with the slides down, but fresh trimmed—everything, in short, ready for a start. The fact was, the Baronet was going to dine with a friend, residing about twelve



The three teams.

miles distant from Townley, with the intention of returning at night. The coach-stable was then entered, and a gratifying sight was presented to by far the majority of the party. It contained thirteen coach-horses, not, perhaps, remarkable for their fine figures, but coming under the denomination of very useful horses for road work, of which they had no small share, scarcely a day passing in the summer, but they took their turns in harness; and when the locality of the fixture suited for wheels, they were generally seen at the cover's side in the winter. The colour was grey, with the exception of one piebald, but the Baronet was not partial to piebalds, having, for the most part, found them soft, and not strong in their harness. Lastly, the harness-room was greatly admired, not only for the cleanliness of the tackle, but for the real business-like appearance of everything which it contained. Among the items were, three sets of road harness; two sets for a pair: two for the break; two of single harness; three pairs of lamps: four sets of bars: two tool boxes, complete: three skids, and two drag-chains; seven box coats (besides those on the coach in the yard), and seventeen whips, some of them having the appearance of not being made yesterday. Then an interesting spectacle followed. At a given moment—the party having returned to the house to finish the bowl of 'bishop'—the three teams came to the door, taking a sweep round the large grass plot in front of the hall door, which set them off to advantage. The Baronet's led the way, driven by his head coachman, and followed by that of Mr. Herson, driven also by his; whilst Jem Powell brought up our hero's in equally good style. As may be supposed, they became the subject of remark, but the preference, as to horses, was unanimously given to that of Mr Herson; and deservedly so, no doubt. In the first place, the prices given for them entitled them to be first-rate; in the next, they were nearly thorough-bred; and lastly, they were as fresh on their legs as when they first felt the rein, which could not be said of the two other teams, some of each of which showed marks of something beyond what is called gentleman's work.

Having taken leave of their host, who expressed himself much pleased with our young sportsman's turn-out, as well as the coachmanlike style in which he approached the house on his arrival, they pursued their road homeward, allowing themselves the same length of time to perform the twenty-four miles of ground.

'Now, Jem,' said Jack Webber, after passing the park gates, 'let us have a little of your history. By the colour on your cheeks, you appear to be all the better for the Baronet's good cheer, and, as I said before, your tongue will slip over the ground like a newly-greased wheel.'

'My history,' said Jem, 'is told in a few words. I have been a road coachman these three-and-thirty years, and never lay rest, thank God, more than a dozen journeys in all that time, except when I broke my leg, and had my right foot frost-bitten. Then I had—like you gentlemen, who goes to school and college to fit you for your situations—the regular education of a coachman. I did not jump from off some country gentleman's pair-horse coach-box, or from behind a counter in a coach-office, or, perhaps, that of a grocer's shop, on to a stage-coach, as some of our present would-be coachmen have done, and who hardly knows a coupling-rein from a bearing-rein, still less what a horse can do in his harness; but I began my education by riding the leaders before my father, on the heavy Brummagem, for better than three years. *That's the place for a young man to learn his business*—before a good coachman, as my father was, and a coach that carries three ton weight, as that often did, in roads over the fellies of the wheels, and none of the best of cattle. Then, I have never had but one master and one coach since I have been regular at work, now going on for thirty-four years.'

'Are you married?' asked Lord Edmonston.

'No, my Lord,' replied Jem; 'I was near being *had* once, but I slipped out on't, and took care never to run my head into that there collar again; I feared it might prove what we calls "a false one."'

'But what has been your objection to the married state?' resumed Lord Edmonston.

'Why, to tell you the truth, my Lord,' answered Jem, 'I have more than one objection to it. In the first place, a gentleman who sat by me on the box, many years ago, made use of these words to a passenger who sat behind him on the roof, and they made such an impression on me that, if I was to live a thousand years, I should never forget them:—"The ancients," he said, "are clearly against the female sex, and the moderns are not very favourably disposed towards them, from all I have read of them." Now, thinks I to myself, surely both ancients and moderns can't be wrong on this here matter; but as neither seems to have a favourable opinion of womankind, I thought I had best leave them alone. And it was a very clever man who spoke this in my hearing.

'Some rum old fellow of a college, I'll be bound for it,' said Jack Webber, 'who would not have given up his common room comforts, and his old port wine, for the finest woman in England.'

'No, he warn't,' resumed Jem; 'but I ain't told you my other reason. I daresay there is much pleasure in the married life, but I am quite certain there is also much pain. What scenes have I witnessed amongst husbands and wives, and parents and children, since I have drove this coach—I mean when taking leave of each other! I have seen two or three rascals a-going to be hanged, but I never saw them half so cast down as I have seen passengers on my coach, when leaving their families behind them—*perhaps for ever!* I have heard them bellowing and crying for the first two stages, and they wouldn't take no comfort. My very heart has bled for them.'

'You must be rich, Jem,' observed Lord Edmonston.

'No, I arn't *rich*, my Lord,' replied Jem; 'not but what, if I was to leave the coach to-morrow, I should have enough to keep me—just able to make tongue and buckle meet.'

'But what have you done with your money, Jem, eh?' said Jack Webber, 'two coaches a day, and no one to look after you! Something for the shirt pocket, every day, eh, Jem?'

'Why,' replied Jem, 'I am not a-going to boast that I am honester than other folks; my having served one master three-and-thirty years will best speak to that point; but I have been a good friend to my poor brother's widow and children. He was killed last Christmas Day thirteen years, on the Worcester mail, and I have supported his family ever since. Poor fellow, he was one of the nicest light coachmen you ever saw on a coach-box; and I hope, one day or another, his eldest boy will have my place.'

'What you have told us is much to your credit,' said Frank Raby, 'and it is no wonder that you have so many friends.'

'I have many kind friends, indeed,' replied Jem; 'only think of Squire Amstey keeping a horse for me at Oxford, all the summer months, on purpose for me to ride out after I come in with my coach; and I have a good dinner at his house every Sunday in the year, if I like to go for it.'

'Then you don't drive on Sundays?' observed Goodall.

'No,' replied Jem; 'I would not work on a Sunday for any man: it's like leading the life of a nigger. I generally goes to church in the morning, and to the Squire's in the evening.'

'No alehouse work,' observed Lord Edmonston.

'I smokes one pipe, and drinks a pint of ale, every evening at the "Black Dog," after I have had my dinner. I am no drinker, nor would I advise any coachman to be such, particularly one that drives over such cold ground as I do. All I have on the road is half a pint of ale, with my lunch, where I meets my coach, and then I enjoy my dinner when I gets in. Indeed, I often say to myself, when returning over those cold hills:—"Oh, how I could set-to now, at a good rump-steak and onions!"'

'I have always thought,' observed Lord Edmonston, 'that road coachmen must obtain a great knowledge of mankind from their every-day communication with persons of all descriptions, and nearly from all countries.'

'Why, my Lord,' said Jem, 'we meets with all sorts—good, bad, and indifferent—and especially on this road. We carries a great many Irish.'

'And how do you find them?' asked Jack Webber.

'There are many good ones amongst them, but still more good for nothing,' was the answer; 'but, saving your presence, gentlemen, they are all devils to brag. I never carried one, *calling himself a gentleman*, that had less than £1500 a year.'

'And a park?' said Raby.

'A park, of course,' resumed Jem; 'and many on them talk of their castles—in the air, I suppose. But I could not help thinking that they must often get pulled up, when talking so big. Indeed, I pulled up one of them myself, last summer. He asked me who lived at Warton House, on our road. I told him the Earl of Connell—my kind friend, as you have heard me speak of, Mr. Raby. "By the powers!" said he, "but I know his Lordship well; he comes from my own country. How I should like to stop and ask him how he does!" Now, as to that part of the story, you know it was quite out of the question, as the hall is nearly a mile from the road; but, as ill-luck for the Irishman would have it, we had not gone far before we meets my Lord, who pulls up his horse and gives me a letter to take to a friend of his in Oxford. "Who is that gentleman?" said the Irishman as soon as the coach went on. "That *nobleman*, sir," said I, "is the Earl of Connell." Now, I says nothing more on the subject for as much as a quarter of an hour, giving the gentleman time to recover himself a little, for he looked mighty simple after the answer I gave him about his "*friend*"; but, at last, I turns myself a little towards him on the box, and looking full in his face, says,—"Why, sir, you seems very intimate with that there Lord."'

'Capital!' exclaimed Lord Edmonston; 'Junius himself never gave a man a more severe rebuke. Let me ask you a question. From your constant observation of character, are you able to distinguish beforehand the persons by whom you are likely to be best remunerated for your trouble—at all events, those who will do you justice, by giving you the customary fee?'

'There are but three descriptions of passengers,' replied Jem, 'who pay more than the accustomed fee, and those are very soon picked out. There is, first, the gentleman who not only bespeaks the box place, but who asks questions about the horses, etc.; he is sure to come the double tip. Next, is the quiet, gentlemanlike-looking passenger, with a good collar to his coat, who merely asks a few questions about the places we pass by on the road, and who has a good-sized black portmanteau about the coach. We are pretty sure of him. But the best customer of all is the just paid-off sailor, three-parts drunk. I have often had a *crown* put into my hands by one of those chaps, and *once* half a guinea, which I refused. "Why, you lubberly land lubber," said he, "if I don't give it to you, I shall give it to the next that steers us; put it into your locker, and be thankful."'

'How do you find women pay you?' asked Houghton.

'Generally speaking, unless they happen to have a young child about the coach, which you are kind to,' answered Jem, 'or can throw in a word or two, to tickle them about their good looks, they are the worst payers we have. So far from giving us a double tip, they are much more apt to tip us the double when they can.'

'You don't seem to be very fond of the women, Jem,' said Goodall.

'They are all very well in their places,' replied Jem, 'but I don't like too many on 'em about my coach. I hates the sight of a bandbox, and still worse of an old maid and her lap-dog.'

'I observe,' said Lord Edmonston, 'there is not so much swearing now among road coachmen as there used to be, when I first travelled by coaches.'

'Please you, my Lord,' answered Jem, 'there is not so much swearing among *gentlemen* as was used to be. Depend upon this, my Lord, we little ones borrows many vices from you great ones; and you great ones, now and then—I ax pardon, my Lord—borrows from us little ones. When gentlemen leave off swearing, depend on it, it will get very much out of fashion.'

At this moment one of the Birmingham and London coaches gave our party the meeting, and called forth some remarks from them on the superior style of the cattle, as well as the improved build of the coach. It was full inside and out, together with an abundance of luggage, but was nevertheless proceeding at the rate of eight miles an hour, on rather a considerable ascent of ground.

'What country in the world but England,' exclaimed Jack Webber, 'can exhibit such a sight as that? We ought to be prouder of it than we are. There go half the population of a village, together with all their *traps*, as we call luggage on the Brighton road, carried at the rate of a good nine miles an hour, all stoppages included; and, although on what may be called a ticklish balance, as safe as if they were in their beds, by the superior system of putting horses into harness and driving them. I repeat, we ought to be prouder of it than we are.'

'They tells me, Mr. Webber,' said Jem Powell, 'though I scarce knows how to believe it, that we shan't be proud of it long. They say coaching by horses is soon to be at an end, and that we are to have coaches go of themselves—that is to say, by some kind of machinery which it is not in my power to explain. This seems a hard case, to knock up such a system as coaching, now that it is just brought to perfection, or nearly so. It will be the ruin of a great many people who now gets their living on the road. But they tells me this is the case in most other things, nowadays. Some busybody, with, perhaps, more brains than his neighbours, and wanting to make himself rich, without caring who he may make poor, comes out with some new-fangled plans, and upsets all the old ones, which did very well for us before.'

'There is some truth in what you have said,' observed Lord Edmonston; 'this is a wise and understanding age; but if we look into the history of mankind, in all periods of the world, we find men have arisen, from time to time, who have changed the whole face of some department of human knowledge; nevertheless, Jem, you need not alarm yourself on this point. I conceive you have been told that carriages will be propelled on roads by what is called a locomotive power, produced by *steam*, but, be assured, it will never take place. Whenever they travel by steam, it must be on iron tram-roads, but the time is *far* distant before that will be accomplished. At all events, coaching by horses will last your time.'

'Then,' resumed Jem, 'there is a man who has built a carriage that cannot be overturned, but they tells me it is as heavy as a broad-wheel waggon, and as much iron about it as is in three of our coaches. Surely our coaches are safe enough, in safe hands.'

'I saw the coach you speak of, tried,' observed Goodall; 'it certainly did run on a bank elevated thirty inches from the ground, and the centre of gravity was not disturbed, but I thought it a sad complicated piece of workmanship, and, for my own part, I would as soon ride in a waggon.'

'Well,' said Jem, 'we must not find fault with all those busybodys, as I calls them, for this *American* chap, Mr. McAdam, is showing our people how to make the roads run well, though they are terribly loth to follow his directions. They won't believe but what those small stones will grind all to pieces in a very short time, instead of—which they do—forming a hard and smooth surface. Indeed, I was myself some time before I could persuade myself that they would do so, even if properly broke, and put thick enough on the road.'

'The surface of a road is formed as ice is formed,' observed

Lord Edmonston, 'by the uniting of its own spiculæ, which dovetail into each other; thus, small stones unite by their own angles, and produce the effect we see. I consider McAdam the greatest benefactor to England since Dr. Jenner, for, until we adopted his plan, we did not know what a good road is. The large stones previously made use of, both in forming and repairing roads, were calculated, mechanically, to render them uneven and full of holes, inasmuch as they acted as levers to raise up the ground, when a wheel passed over one end of them.'

'You have been very lucky in the accident way, have you not, Jem?' said Webber.

'Never throwed a coach over, sir,' replied Jem, 'but have had her over twice—once by the axle-tree breaking, when I broke my leg, and once—before we got patent boxes—by losing a fore-wheel. There ought to be an act of parliament to prevent any coach from running that has not patent boxes to the wheels, for linch-pins are not to be depended upon; and axle-trees should be made stronger than they are.'

'I think so, too,' observed Webber; 'the sustaining power should be much more than equal to the impending weight. I had my coach over once from an axle-tree giving way, but, luckily, no one was hurt. Coach axle-trees should be tried before used by an hydraulic press, the test being twice the weight they would ever be required to sustain. And care should be taken that not only the best iron is used, but that there is no flaw in it—for axle-trees are always found to break where any flaw exists.'

'But would it not be difficult to find out whether there is a flaw in the iron?' asked Jem.

'Not at all,' replied Webber; 'let the axle-tree be placed on an anvil, and struck on its nose at one end with a key, or any bit of iron or steel, and if, on the ear being placed at the opposite nose, a hissing sound is heard, you may be sure a flaw exists somewhere. Should it be about the centre, no harm may arise; but if within a short distance of the shoulder, which is the chief bearing part, it is a great source of danger.'

'As to accidents to coaches,' resumed Jem, 'they are almost always to be traced to carelessness either in the builders, the drivers, or the horsers of them. How many proprietors keep on a night coachman, when they know he is drunk on his box four nights in the week, although, to be sure, this part of the business is not so bad as it used to be, in my early days! It was a chance, then, to find a night coachman quite sober. Then how many proprietors keep on a restive horse, sooner than lose a few pounds by getting rid of him to the best bidder! Again: what cripples will some on 'em put on the mails over the middle ground! A gentleman once told me, that he was on the box of one of the cross country mails, when, after passing a very awkward bridge, on a dark and foggy night, the coachman said to him:—"Well over that 'ere bridge, sir; *there's only one eye among us*," which, of course, was his own. But only think, sir, of four blind horses for night work!'

'Give us a few maxims, Jem,' said Frank Raby, 'by the observance of which you have succeeded so well in keeping your coach on her legs.'

'They are few and simple, sir,' replied Jem; 'but, mind ye, I haven't had much practice of night work, my lamps being only lit for an hour or two in the dead of the winter; but you shall have what you wish. First of all, I examine my coaches before they leave the builder's yard, to see that the best kind of stuff is put into them; and I am very particular about the pole fitting tight in the furchells. Once a pole begins to swag in the furchells, a little thing breaks it: and, mind ye, it is one of the main stays of a coach!—what the rudder is to the ship. Then I never drive a shying horse as leader, if I can help it; but if he is too slight for the wheel of our coach, or will not work well in that place, I always put a mope over his face, which prevents his seeing anything beyond a few yards of the road under his feet, and that's quite enough. A coach-horse don't want to be a-looking about him, no more than the man who drives him, unless it be at his road. I am very particular about my harness—about the reins and billets. I watch the wearing parts, and have them cut out and replaced in time, and I make my horse-keepers beat the collars and keep them clean, so that, in spite of the heavy loads my coach carries, and the steep hills on our road, I never have a gib-horse, because I never have a sore shoulder. In short, I hates to see a broken skin about a coach-horse, and he never need have one, if his coachman minds his business. Poor things! coach-horses have too often punishment enough in their work, without being nearly flayed alive, as they are in some hands. As for mine, they are as round as balls, and as free from scars as you gentlemen's hunters are; indeed, people say I shall spoil the coach[1] by nursing them too much, and not galloping headlong, as some of t'others do on this road. But see what happens; scarce a week but one on 'em goes over. A gentleman comes up to me t'other day, and says, "Jem, what will you take me to Birmingham for?" "My fare, sir," said I, "is fifteen shillings." "I can go by the Rora (Aurora)," said he, "for ten." "No doubt, sir," I replied, "but then there's the doctor's bill!" He went with me, and that very day they had an accident with the Rora.'

'Of what description?' asked Lord Edmonston.

'They was a-galloping, my Lord, against the opposition, which was just behind them, and over they went.'

'And was any one hurt?'

'Several, my Lord.'

'Of course the opposition stopped to afford assistance to the passengers?'

'Not a bit of it, my Lord; one gentleman told me that, as he was in the act of rolling away from the coach, he heard the opposition coachman sing out to the other, as he galloped by—"What, Joe, your bees are a-swarming this fine morning, are they?" Then again,' resumed Jem, 'I takes a precaution that, perhaps, few others does. On my two worst hills, I gives the man who looks after the road, a pot of beer, now and then, to leave a few yards of loose stone or gravel in two, or perhaps three, places on the near side; when I feel the coach press on the wheel-horses going down these hills, I run her into this loose stone, or gravel, and, if it don't quite balance her, it so far checks her as to make all safe. Then, as this prevents my putting on the skid, I can let 'em go towards the bottom, and——'

'Let them avail themselves of the impetus of motion—the *vis vivida*, as we call it,' observed Lord Edmonston.

'*I* calls it cheating 'em out of half the opposite hill,' said Jem.

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[1] Which he did.

'You have had your share of *kickers,* I suppose,' observed Webber.

'Not lately,' replied Jem. 'My master and I are old acquaintances now; I can pick my stock a little; and depend on't I don't pick out a kicker. But when I was a-going over, I didn't think much of kickers, dangerous as they are. If leaders, I always had a ring on the leading reins, between the head turrets of the wheelers and the pad turrets of the leaders, so as to prevent their getting under their tails; and if at wheel, I took care to have a right strong kicking trace over their backs. I got tired of carrying a wheeler on the pole, one day; and as for leaders, I have had their legs so fast, either among the bars, or among the pole-chains, that I more than once thought I must have got a saw to work to get them out. Never keep a kicker, Mr. Raby, he gives no notice; a mere pinch of a pad, or even a twist in his trace, sets him off; and he cares not where he runs you, till he has had his kick out. Depend on't he'll never leave it off, for his real meaning is—*he don't like work,* and he wants to kick himself out of harness at once. And be sure always keep your own side on the road——'

Jack Webber—interrupting him—

'The rule of the road is a paradox quite,
I confess I have thought it so long:
If you go to the left you are sure to go right,
If you go to the right, you are wrong.'

'I am not much of a man for *poetry,*' resumed Jem; 'but never throw a chance away in coaching, for, remember, other limbs and lives are in your care besides your own. Never run too near carts, and waggons, and so forth. The horses in them may bolt towards you, and catch hold of you before you can get away from them—especially if your team is not one of the handiest. But, mind this—wherever your leaders' bars can go, your wheels can go, without touching, with something to spare—that is to say, provided your leaders are on the collars at the time. I was once in a nice scrape by going too near a cart in which two horses ran abreast of each other before the shaft horse. The trace of the off horse caught my roller bolt, and thus we were locked together as fast as if we had been in the same vice.'

'And how did you get out of it?' asked Webber.

'Why, by a bit of good luck,' replied Jem; 'the cart-horses kept pace with me, till they got blown, and then stopped of their own accord; the driver was in the cart, without reins, and had no command of them. It cured me of running too near a team of powerful horses

'But to show you how soon an accident may happen to a coach, and from what a trifling cause, I will tell you what happened to a fellow-servant of mine about a dozen years back. The collar of his box coat was fastened by what is called a hook and eye; having occasion to stroke his chin with his right hand, on which was a strong glove, with a hole in it, the hook entered the hole, and held his hand fast. The horses bolted at the moment towards the near side of the road, which, being deprived of the use of his right hand, he had not the power of preventing, and the consequence was, that his coach was upset, and one passenger killed and several badly hurt.'

On arriving at the house where Jem Powell had been picked up, he was taken leave off by the party, our hero slipping a five-pound note into his hand, as he gave it a hearty shake; and the fresh team being put to the coach, within a minute of the time allowed they were at the hall door of their owner, with scarcely a wet hair on their skins, a cool breeze from the north having met them point-blank for the last five miles. In the course of the evening, the doings of the morning were talked over, much in the following strain:—

'Well, Raby,' said Hargrave, 'we have spent a very pleasant day. Peyton is the same straightforward good sort of fellow as he was when we first became acquainted with him; and how complete is his establishment in everything!'

'There is no better,' said Jack Webber, 'take it altogether, and there is a workman at the head of it, which is everything. As a horseman and a coachman Peyton has not met his equal. And is not old Jem capital, with his broad-brimmed hat and copper-coloured weather-beaten mug and his lingo? No person could mistake his calling; and how quaintly, yet to the purpose, does he express himself on all subjects on which he speaks! He has been an excellent servant to Costar, and is highly respected on the road.[1] Have you enjoyed yourself to-day, Edmonston?'

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[1] It is to be lamented that there is no print in existence of this thorough-bred coachman, who was the *beau-idéal* of his calling.

'It would have been impossible *not* to have done so,' replied his Lordship. 'In the first place, it was one of the finest mornings I ever saw in my life, and I delight in a fine spring morning above all things. I always think that the same animal pleasure which makes the bird sing, rises sensibly in the heart of man.'

'Give me a November morning,' interrupted Somerby, 'and music of another sort than the chirping of birds and bleating of lambs. This is all very well for your pastoral poets to sing about: but, as Forrest says, there is no such melody to the ear of a sportsman, with a good stud of hunters in his stable, as the clinking of women's pattens in the Melton streets on a dark night in December.'

'Every man to his taste,' resumed Lord Edmonston; 'all these things are very well in their way, if not carried too far. I see no objection, for example, to a gentleman driving his own coach, provided he do not lose caste by transforming himself into a coachman. But, I repeat, the love of the pursuit does not admit of his going to *extremes*. We debase ourselves by imitating servants in the first place; and, in the next, by exalting them to something like an equality with ourselves, we make them conceited, and, consequently, destroy subordination. And the example is often injurious to very young men. I knew one, very well connected, and with good prospects before him, who began by affecting the character of a coachman, and ended by adopting it, to the great mortification of his family.'

'You are hitting me under the bars,' said Jack Webber, with one of his good-humoured smiles.

'Present company are always excepted,' replied the peer; 'besides, you have resumed your place in society, which, indeed, you can scarcely be said to have lost; for I know that, when you took it into your head to turn coachman, you never forgot that you were a gentleman. Indeed, I have been told that you were the cause of working a reformation amongst your brethren of the whip on the Brighton road.'

'As for myself,' resumed Jack Webber, 'I was never happier than during the three years I was a coachman, and I wish the next three years of my life may be as well and profitably employed. The devil, they say, always employs an idle man, but I was too busy for him, and he left me alone.

Idleness is the parent of all vice, both in man and beast; and, when I had done my day's work, I was seldom inclined for any mischief. A newspaper, or a book, with one glass of grog, after my supper, and then the night-cap, formed my almost daily course.'

'But, Frank,' said Lord Edmonston, 'with these studs of yours, both for the field and road, when will you be able to find time to comply with the wishes of your late uncle and father, and take a tour on the continent? You will find good account in it. You need not adopt the peculiarities of one country or another; but, rely on it, travelling is very essential to men who are to live in the world: it not only enlarges the mind and improves the understanding, but it frees it from prejudices, which is a great point gained. In the last page of a diary kept by my father, when he went the grand tour, is this sentence:—"I am truly glad that I have taken the advice of my father, though sorely against my will, to take this tour. It has dispelled prejudices, short-sightedness, and caprice, to which I was previously addicted. With change of place, I found my ideas were changed, as also my opinions and feelings; and, having reflected on much that I saw and heard, I returned to my own country a more charitable and a better disposed man than I had left it."'

'I have not made up my mind on this subject,' replied Raby. 'It is true, my uncle suggested a tour on the continent, but perceiving I did not exactly respond to his suggestion, he no longer pressed it. I have conversed with several of my friends, senior of course to myself, who have been abroad for longer or shorter periods, and they assured me that they all suffered during the first half of the time from what the French call *la maladie du pays*, the result of their regrets for having left their homes and friends; and, during the second, from a perpetual longing to return. To those young men who labour under a sense of weariness and satiety of the good things they enjoy in England, and who have no active pursuits, a sojourn abroad may be an agreeable and healthful change; but by a person, who, like myself, has a pursuit for every day in the year—whose wish is to live the life of a country gentleman and a sportsman, and who has no desire to breathe the unwholesome and somewhat tainted atmosphere of courts, little advantage is to be gained by it.'

CHAPTER XVI

The B.D.C. and B.C.M. Our Sportsman makes a tour, in which he visits many of the most celebrated fox-hunting establishments in England.

OUR hero's next move was to London, where he had apartments taken for him at one of the best hotels, in the best part of the town, and stabling for twelve horses in a mews hard by. As may be imagined in so young a man, he was occasionally to be seen in the streets and the park with his team, in the latter, indeed, always on Sundays; but he generally preferred the public roads, especially the one on which his education for a coachman had been completed, that to Windsor and Eton; and twice a week, during his sojourn in London, he gave a dinner to his party at the Castle Inn, Salt Hill, bringing them back to town in the evening, performing the ground, with a change at Hounslow, in two hours, to a minute. Richmond was also another of his favourite rendezvous, where two or three others of the amateur coachmen of his day assembled, and where excellent hand-in-the-pocket dinners were partaken of by the passengers which each brought down—first-class men in their line, of course. But, it may be asked, were there no mishaps on the road from this after-dinner work, with well-bred and highly-fed cattle (the expressive epithet 'spicy' was not then in the vocabulary)? Not often. A pole was broken one night between Brentford and London, by an amateur working for his amateur friend, and who dropped one of his reins, although a very good coachman; and on another, owing to a *bolt* on the shoot from off Kew Bridge, a singular accident occurred. No sooner did the horses feel the drag press upon them, than they got the better of their driver, also a first-rate workman, and were only pulled up by coming in contact with some iron paling, enclosing a gentleman's grounds. 'A dreadful smash, of course—a case for the coroner!' methinks I hear my reader exclaim. Two horses were killed, it is true, but the Corinthians escaped, with the exception of one, who was actually impaled on the iron spikes on which he fell; but, hard as Corinthian brass, he was not killed, and in a few weeks recovered. Then, on another occasion, in returning from Salt Hill, our hero had a narrow escape, as had also the party who were on his coach. His horses got the better of him, and where, reader, would you suppose they were pulled up? You would never guess, so you shall hear at once.—*Between the eight horses of the down Exeter waggon!* Miraculous as it may appear, neither man nor horse was injured to any serious extent. The fact was, what are called 'the stretchers'—rods about the thickness of a mop handle, which were attached to each pair of the waggon-horses, to prevent their leaning towards each other in their work—checked the career of the horses, as they broke their way through them, and so far modified the collision between the waggon and the coach, as to cause no further damage than breaking the pole of the latter, and hurting two of the horses.

It was during this visit to London that Frank Raby was elected a member of the B.D.C., at that time held at the small town of Benson, in Oxfordshire, but afterwards removed, on account of the distance from London, to the Black Dog Inn, at Bedfont, a small village fourteen miles from London, on the Great Western Road, then kept by a person named Harvey, famous for his beefsteaks, as also for the fish sauce which still bears his name. It was composed of about thirty members (at least seventy have been numbered since), including the best and most experienced amateur coachmen of those days, at the head of whom was the great John Wall, the father of the field and the road, as he was even then called in the sporting world; and a curious circumstance occurred on the first day of our hero making his appearance at it. George IV., then Prince of Wales, was changing horses at the door of the inn at which the club dined, and was informed that his health was that moment about to be drunk by the members, with three times three. The Prince afterwards acknowledged the compliment to one of the party, at Carlton House, adding—'Was not old John Wall among you?' On being answered in the affirmative, he replied—'I thought I knew his halloo.' Then there was another well-known and amusing character, a member of this club. His name was Price. His scene of action was on the Great Western Road, on which he worked, as an amateur, nearly as regularly as any coachman upon it. But it is for this evening's exploits that his fame is recorded here. After five bottles of hock, which he could put under his waistcoat, at a sitting, without being much affected by them, he would fill a bumper, and, placing the glass to stand on his head, he would sing a song, in which the *names of every coachman and horse-keeper* employed on a certain coach from London to Plymouth, were introduced. Nor was this all, he would, at the same time, go through the manœuvres of hitting wheelers and leaders, without spilling a drop of his wine; and after he had drunk it off, he would run the empty glass up and down the large silver buttons of his coat, with very singular effect. Then the following anecdote speaks to the prevalence of his ruling passion for the coach-box. At the time to which we have been alluding, the French revolution was raging in all its horrors. The subject being discussed in his presence, he took a letter from his pocket, and thus addressed those who were present:—'What's the French revolution to me? Here is Bill Simmons, the first man that ever drove the Exeter mail out of Exeter, turned over to the heavy coach, and against his will. *Now, that is what I call a revolution!*'

There was another club formed at this time, of which it may be imagined our hero was anxious to become a member, and the character he had acquired in society at once secured him his election; for, as Johnson said to Burke, who recommended a candidate for the Literary Club *as a man of gentle manners*—'no more need be said.' The one now alluded to was generally called either the 'Whip Club,' or the 'Four-in-hand Club,' but its *real* title was the 'Four-horse Club.' Their first meeting was held in April 1808; and they assembled, afterwards, every first and third Thursday in May, and the same in June, at the house of their president, in Cavendish Square, whence they drove in procession to Salt Hill, on the Bath road, where they dined, alternately, at the two capital inns for which that delightful village has been so celebrated—one of them, indeed, especially so, as having been the scene of the destruction of thirteen persons in one day, from eating mock turtle soup, which had been left to stand a night in a copper vessel not properly tinned. Two guineas a head was the price of these dinners, and the utmost good fellowship prevailed at them. Neither were themselves only considered; their charities to coachmen and guards in distress were largely dispensed, and they were the chief means of establishing the 'Benevolent Club,' which, to this day, is the refuge of such of that class of persons as are unable to get their living in their calling—that is to say, such as had the foresight to enrol their names on its books. In fact, there was nothing that could be cavilled at in the proceedings of this club, unless it might be the somewhat unnecessary parade of the procession, which generally contained at least a dozen teams, each *boná fide* member having an honorary member on his box. Not much, however, could be said against this; it afforded a splendid spectacle on a fine June morning, each member vieing with his neighbour in the elegance and *propriety* of his turn-out; and it may in truth be said, that neither before nor since has its equal been seen in any country in the world, for the excellent workmanship of the carriages and harness, and the superior class of horses that were attached to them.

As may be supposed, all eyes—at least all those of the members of the Four-horse Club—were upon Frank Raby and his team, as he entered the square on the first morning of his appearance; neither were they, in any respect, disappointed. His coach was new for the occasion; his harness—patent leather for pads and winches was not then known—as clean and as shining as Lord Salton's coachman's blacking could make it; an extra pound of soap had been used that morning on the horses; and, by way of a finish, the manly and handsome person of the owner, becomingly dressed for the occasion, and with a well-selected *bouquet* in his breast, produced the *coup.* By his side sat his friend Hargrave, elected an honorary member of the club; and his team—the picking of his stable, of course, having the black piebald off leader—was pronounced all-sufficient and business-like, although, as might have been expected, not first-rate; the premiership having been awarded to that of Sir John Inkleton, which time and better judgment had rendered perfect. But having mentioned his blacking, we must not pass over the *crack* team of those times—that of the Earl of Salton, who, although not a member of the club, generally was on the look-out for the procession, and being, by the superiority of his cattle, able to give any of the members the go-by when he pleased, would occasionally amuse himself by so doing.

It may be gathered, by what has been said of him, that Lord Edmonston—although a young nobleman of a highly honourable character, uniting prudence with liberality to a degree not often experienced at his period of life, and, as may also be recollected, not only a kind friend, but an affectionate and serviceable monitor to our hero in the hour of need, although he was at that time little known to his Lordship—was neither a practical coachman nor sportsman—beyond driving his own curricle, in the one case, and joining the hounds of his neighbourhood, in the other; not so much, perhaps, from the love of hunting, which he did not profess to understand, as for the exercise and society which the noble pursuit afforded him. At a dinner, then, given by Sir John Inkleton, a day or two after one of the processions of the Four-in-hand Club had taken place, and at which, by the introduction of Frank Raby, his Lordship was one of the guests, the conversation having turned upon the doings of this very celebrated club, he was thus heard to speak of it:—

'It may be all very well,' said his Lordship, 'for gentlemen to drive their own carriages, wheresoever and whensoever they like; but it strikes me that there is too much *system* in the proceedings of the Four-horse Club. There is, likewise, in the dress of the members, too great a desire to imitate the public coachmen, to the detriment of their own caste, as well as of their personal appearance. I rather give the preference to the Benson Club, inasmuch as the gratification arising from the pursuit is equally enjoyed by the members, but in a quieter way, and stripped of all display.'

'There is some justice in your remarks,' observed Sir John Inkleton; 'still I am disposed to believe that much more of good than of harm has been the result of both of those clubs. That great improvement has taken place in coach travelling during the last few years—a point of immense importance to a commercial country, which England is—in its various branches and departments, no one will feel disposed to deny; and coach proprietors are entitled to their meed of praise for their exertions in aiding the good cause. I am, however, bold enough to assert that not the least, if not the principal efficient cause has been, the great interest taken in all that concerns what is called *the road*, by men of fortune and judgment. Men of mathematical and classical education, indeed, of refined manners, and possessing humane feelings, have made the working of a coach, drawn by four horses, their study, as well as their amusement; and although grave old codgers have laughed at them, editors of newspapers pitied them, and fine ladies felt shocked at them, the public have reason to thank them, travellers to pray for them, and the noblest of the brute creation, had they the faculty of speech, might pour out their gratitude for the benefits they have received at their hands. In the first place, they pointed out the cruelty of enforcing, in the low-bred horse, the speed and powers peculiar only to those possessing a certain portion of high blood. Secondly, harness, if ill-constructed, independently of being unsafe, is more tormentingly punishing to horses than all the whipping that can be applied to them. The members of these clubs improved this in many particulars, of which, without practical experience of the defects, they never could have been judges, and of which, in too many instances, coach proprietors and their servants were too careless or too ignorant to be informed. In short, to the amateur coachmen of England Englishmen are greatly indebted. To them we owe the improved manners as well as morals of modern road coachmen, amongst whom they have excited a wholesome spirit of emulation, a creditable style of dress and address, as well as honest pride in the condition of their horses, cleanliness of their harness, and so forth. Coach travelling is, as it were, metamorphosed into something approaching to luxury, from a tedious and disgusting labour; and a modern stage-coach is become a beautiful object on our roads, in the place of an unwieldy machine, at variance with mathematical principles. There is an increase of speed with a diminution of danger—a great point gained, and to the accomplishment of which the improvement in axle-trees and wheels has most materially tended. "Dry wheels make wet horses," is a proverb on the road; and independently of the safety of the patent box, in which the arm of the axle-tree rests, the lubrication of it by the constant flow of oil, by reducing friction, is nearly equal to half a horse's draught. I am quite sure, then, that it adds much to the pleasure of the members of those clubs, and to other amateurs of the coach-box, to reflect that, whilst driving their own fine and well-appointed teams, they are affording instruction and example to their humbler and hard-working fellow-creatures, as well as performing a patriotic and public good; and as for the too common but erroneous opinion amongst certain classes of society, that a man cannot frequent a public coach-box without being morbidly infected in manners and good taste, by coming in contact with one very much his inferior, the notion is too absurd for even a comment. Did the learned Dr. Paley suffer, either in his manners or his morals, by conversing, as was his custom, with every artificer he could get hold of in his walks? No, the case is quite otherwise; and those public coachmen who have come most in contact with amateurs in their line, are uniformly improved by so doing; —they are better coachmen and better men. You hear from them no ill language, no gross and offensive expressions—to the female ear especially; and what is of still more importance, you are not disgusted by insolence to the inferior class of passengers on their coaches; neither are your feelings outraged by unnecessary cruelty to the animals placed under their control, and, by consequence, at their mercy. I was gratified, indeed, by an answer strongly corroborative of what I have asserted, which I lately received from one of them to my remark, that a leader in his team trotted along before the bars, doing little beyond carrying her harness. "*She cannot work*, Sir John," said her coachman; "there is nothing left in her but a good heart, and I do not like to whip that out of her." I made no reply; but I silently put up a prayer, that neither the head nor the heart of that man might ache on this side of eternity, and that the humane expression would be found booked to his credit on the other.'

'You have advocated your cause ably,' said Goodall; 'and although no coachman myself, I can neither discern folly, nor anything approaching to impropriety, in gentlemen driving their own coaches, and entering scientifically into the pursuit, as others do by that of the turf. All that I have read on the subject upholds them. If the Athenians, for example, the most polished nation of all antiquity, deemed it a feather in their caps to be esteemed skilful charioteers, why should Englishmen consider it a disgrace? Does not Homer make his Nestor the wisest man and the best coachman of his day? Does he not make Priam put, *with his own hands* his own horses to the car in which himself and the herald demand the body of Hector? Is he not blamed, indeed, for dwelling upon the description of Juno's chariot, whilst his reader expects him to lead him into the thickest of the battle?—

> "For why should Homer deck the gorgeous car,
> When our raised souls are eager for the war?
> Or dwell on every wheel, when loud alarms,
> And Mars, in thunder, call the host to arms?"

But is he not so minutely faithful to this part of his subject, that, at the funeral games of Patroclus, he represents Menelaus borrowing one of the horses of Agamemnon (Æthe, by name, I think) to put to his chariot with his own? Has not the sublimest poet that ever dipped pen into ink immortalised the coachman in song? Allow me, then, to propose that we drink a bumper to "Success to the Road!—and to all who patronise and support it."'

'With all my heart,' said the host.

'And with all mine,' said Mr. Warburton, uncle to the host, and who was one of the party. 'In my younger days I was always an inside passenger whenever I chanced to travel by a stage-coach; but now I pay extra for the box-place, or a front seat on the roof, for the purpose of hearing the shrewd, and often witty remarks of the coachman to those whom he has occasion to address, either in his calling or otherwise. But a friend of mine thus accounts for this shrewdness, as well as quickness and suitableness of reply:—"*It is the pace that does it,*" said he—"the increased pace at which they travel, and quickness of their changes of horses on the road, which are every day becoming more extraordinary. Philosophers tell us," added he, "that *wit* consists in quickly assembling our ideas, and *putting them together in an instant.*" Now, as analogy is but the resemblance between things, with regard to circumstances or effects, may there not be something akin to analogy betwixt putting ideas together quickly, and taking one set of horses from, and putting another set to, a coach in little more than sixty seconds of time? Certainly, as far as my experience has gone, the faster the coach, the more sharp and ready has been its coachman with all his remarks and replies, and compressing what they have to say in as small a space as possible; and I witnessed, a short time back, one very laughable instance of it. At the first change out of London, after the coach had stopped, perhaps three-fourths of a minute, a passenger put his head out of the window, and asked the coachman if he could have some breakfast. "Yes, sir," he replied (he was at that moment in the act of gathering the reins into his hand, the fresh horses having been put to the coach), "if you can eat it whilst I can count twenty;" and, springing on to his box, he was off, leaving his passenger to his meditations.'

It was in the course of this summer that our hero first attended the renowned Bibury race-meeting, then in the zenith of its glory, and he was elected one of its members *nemine contradicente.* In fact, he was exactly the sort of person calculated for it. In the first place, there was no lack of means; in the next, he had purchased a horse in training, said to be likely to win what is called the 'Welter Stakes,' the best of the meeting, and so called because the weight carried was thirteen stone for all ages. And he had a twofold object in view, with respect to this horse. If he did not win the stakes, he was convinced he would make him a capital hunter, from his great power and size. But who was to be his jockey? 'I will ride him myself,' said he; 'I can ride the weight on a light saddle.'

'Surely not,' observed Hargrave; 'you never rode a race in your life; and you are aware that you will have to contend against all the best gentlemen jockeys of the day.'

'There must be a beginning to everything,' replied Frank Raby, 'as well as an end. It is true I have never ridden a race, but I have seen many ridden, and heard the instructions given to the jockeys, who tried my two Oaks fillies twice, in private: and also when they came to the post. I know pretty well what a horse can do under such a weight as mine.'

'And have you backed your horse to win?' resumed Hargrave.

'Only to a small amount,' replied Raby—'just enough to give me an additional interest in the race. I have taken 200 to 20 against him from O'Hara the "leg," whom you see there on the grey horse, with winkers to his bridle.'

It was at this period that George IV., when Prince of

Wales, was a constant attendant of Bibury race-course, being domiciled for the week at the Earl of Sherborne's, whose mansion and park are about four miles distant from the course—a beautiful grass drive leading from one to the other. As his Royal Highness had a horse in the stakes, he was anxious to see his competitors, and at length cast his eye upon *Nameless*, which was the name of our hero's nag.

'What horse is that?' demanded the Prince.

'Nameless, by King Fergus, out of Mary, by Herod,' was the answer.

'He is a fine horse,' continued the Prince: 'who rides him?'

'His owner, Mr. Raby, our new member, sir,' said Colonel Leigh.

'Oh,' said the Prince, smilingly; 'we have not much to fear from *him*; he is a fine young man, and, I hear, very good across a country, for his years, but, if it comes to a race, he will have a poor chance against Lord Solville, and half a dozen of the old hands that are here to-day.'

We will, however, repeat the communication between our hero and his trainer, an hour before the race, and then give the result.

'Now, sir, if you please,' said his trainer, 'the bell has rung for saddling, and you will soon be at work. Excuse my saying a word or two to you before starting, as it will be too late afterwards. Your horse is *well*, and that is a great point, and I think he will run a good horse. But pray don't be in too big a hurry to get home, which is the great fault of all young race-riders. Your horse will be in a hurry, for he is a free goer in his work; but you have strength enough to keep him back. But mind this, above all things—don't lie out of your ground, but get away with the front horses, and keep with them as long as you can, and head them at last, if you are able. I do not think you can win; nevertheless, do not throw away a chance. Take three good pulls at your horse, the last within a distance of home, and if this plan will not enable you to win, it will be your horse's fault, and not your own. Now, let me give you a leg; and when I have mounted my hack, you shall give your horse a gallop with me, to let him feel his legs. It need not be a long one, for thirteen stone is a cruel weight on a race-horse.'

'It is so,' replied Raby; 'but I approve of the *principle*; it encourages the breeding of powerful thorough-bred horses, which at present are very scarce. I was at Newmarket in the Craven meeting, and I did not see half a dozen horses in training, equal to my weight over a country.'

Now then for the race. Fourteen horses came to the post, and, after one false start, all got away except one, who reared and fell back upon his rider, but without materially injuring him. Our hero, upon Nameless, got a good place in the ruck, which he kept three parts of the way, riding strictly to orders. In fact, he looked very much like a winner half a mile from home, his hands being quietly down, and the fourth out of six that were in front, with all the rest beaten off.

'Nameless is winning,' roars O'Hara; 'by the powers, but I shall lose my £200!'

But Nameless did *not* win. His rider let him loose too soon, and, forgetting the advice of his trainer, to give him *the third* pull, was beaten a clear length by the two leading horses, who contested the race to a head—the Prince's horse winning by the admirable jockeyship of Lord Solville.

And now for the scene at the scales.

'You made but one mistake, sir,' said his trainer; 'and that was a fatal one. Had you recollected what I told you, and pulled back, or, I should rather say, eased, your horse a little within 200 yards from home, you could not have lost the race. Depend on it, you have the best horse of the field, but you were beaten by being outridden by my Lord and Mr. Burrell, as I feared you would be, if it came to a race, which it did. I never saw finer riding at Newmarket than what my Lord showed us to-day. He took a pull at his horse not a hundred yards from home, and won his race by so doing, for the other horse had the best of it up to that time. Only think what a thing a pull must be to a horse at the end of two miles, with thirteen stone on his back, and in such a fast-run race as this!'

'I certainly lost the race,' replied our hero, 'by omitting the pull within the distance, according to your directions; but the fact was, my horse appeared to me to be running over his horses, pulling so very hard, that, thinking I had the race in hand, I was unwilling to pull him back, from fear of putting him out of his stroke, or causing him to change his leg.'

'Well, sir,' resumed the trainer, 'the mischief is done now, and it cannot be undone. I told you, your horse was *well*, and that he would run a good horse; but mind this in future —do not only not forget the pull at the proper time and place, but likewise that some horses pull hardest when they are most beaten. Your horse, however, was not beaten; all he wanted was a moment's ease, when he would have come again, and headed his horses in style.'

It is in the nature of emulation to know no bounds. Our hero was by no means satisfied with his own performance; and excited a little by the remarks of some of the party with whom he dined after the race, that his horse could have won the Welter if he had had a better jockey on his back, resolved on attempting to redeem his credit. Sending for his trainer, then, he thus addressed him :—

'I should like to run the race over again which I lost to-day; I think I can beat both those horses by a different system of riding. I wish you would see the trainer of each as soon as possible, and propose a match—same weight and distance—for 500 guineas a side. Try the Prince's man first, and, if he decline, make the same proposal to the trainer of the second horse.'

'I must obey your orders, of course, sir,' replied the trainer, 'but allow me first to ask you how you mean to ride your horse, should your offer be accepted?'

'I mean to make running from end to end, and not to wait, as I did before,' answered our young sportsman; 'I am convinced that my horse was the stoutest in the race yesterday, and that, if I had made strong running with him from the post, I should have cut down my competitors.'

'Well, sir,' replied the trainer, 'I will go and see what I can do to forward your wishes, but I think it my duty to tell you that, for a young jockey, you are about to undertake——'

'We will talk about your duty, etc., at another time,' said Raby; 'go directly and see the trainers, as they soon will be in bed. Send for me out of the club-room, and tell me what they say.'

In less than half an hour, the following result was conveyed to him :—

'I have seen both trainers, Mr. Raby,' said Mr. Lilly, for that was the name of the artist who brought Nameless to the post. 'The Prince's man declines, as his horse has a heavy match over his head; but Bliss says, he doubts not but that Mr. Portmore will accept your challenge, and that you shall have his answer in the morning. But, sir,' continued Lilly, 'had you not better consider further before——'

'No time for considering now,' said our hero; 'I must return to my party, and will see you in the morning.'

As our hero sat at his breakfast, in company with his friends Inkleton, Hargrave, and Goodall, the following note was brought him:—

'Sir,—

'My trainer informs me that you propose a match between Nameless and Antonio, same weight and distance, as likewise riders, as for the Welter yesterday, for 500 guineas, P. P. I admire your spirit in making this offer, after the event of yesterday, but, being an older man than yourself, and somewhat more experienced, perhaps, in racing affairs, I think it only fair to say that I ought to give you three pounds. On these conditions, my horse shall be at the post on Thursday, after the last race of the day. Your early answer will oblige,

'Yours faithfully, etc.,

'A. Portmore.

'To Francis Raby, Esq.'

'Well,' exclaimed Sir John Inkleton, 'Portmore acts, as he always acts, the part of an honourable man.'

'The three pounds may give you the race,' exclaimed Hargrave; 'but don't forget the pull.'

'I will back you for a pound or two,' said Goodall, although I know so little of racing as to be almost incredulous as to three pounds being an advantage worth speaking about in such a weight as you propose to carry.'

'My good fellow,' said Fairfax, who entered the room at that moment: 'the key of the stable-door once lost the trial between two of the first race-horses of the day.'

'An old woman's story,' exclaimed our hero; 'but (pulling the bell hastily at the moment) I'll have none of his three pounds. I'll run the match at evens, and lay another £500 I win it.'

On the waiter appearing with some letter-paper, and being ordered to send immediately for Lilly, the following answer was penned, and as instantly dispatched to Mr. Portmore:—

'Dear Sir,—

'I feel, as I ought to feel, the handsome conditions on which you offer to accept my challenge to run Antonio against Nameless, on Thursday, same weight, etc., etc., as in the Welter stakes; but so satisfied am I that, as far as concerned my horse, it was yesterday, from end to end, a false run race, that I am unwilling to alter the terms proposed by me. Should I be beaten, myself alone will be to blame; and it may act as a salutary lesson to me through life, not to persist in my own opinion contrary to that of those who are more experienced than myself. I herewith send you the articles of the match, signed on my part, and on your signature being attached, my horse shall be at the post on the day, and at the time stated in your letter.

'Believe me, dear Sir,
'Faithfully and obliged,
'Francis Raby.

'To the Hon. A. Portmore, etc., etc.'

Within another half-hour, the parties met in the street, and our hero was informed by his antagonist that the articles of the match were signed, and already in the hands of the steward; and in ten minutes more, the following conversation took place between the owner of Nameless and his trainer:—

'Well, sir,' said Mr. Lilly, 'I find you have made your match, and I wish we may pull through. I find you will not have the three pounds. I think, sir, you should have taken it. Never throw away a chance in racing. Three pounds at such high weight, to be sure, is not much to get, but it is something. They are betting six to four against us in the town, and I daresay it will be seven.'

'So much the better,' replied Raby, 'as I may be able to hedge some of my money, if I alter my opinion of the event by to-morrow—not that I think it likely I shall do so. But what is it, Lilly, that you consider your duty to tell me, respecting the match?'

'Why, sir,' replied Lilly, 'if I understand you right, you are going to perform almost the most difficult act a jockey is called upon to perform. Nothing, next to the struggle of the last few yards between two horses very nearly equal—which we call the set-to—is so difficult in racing horsemanship as making running by a jockey, solely for the benefit of the horse he himself is riding. In other words, it requires the experience of some years in a jockey to be a good judge of pace, that is, of not merely the pace he himself is going, but *how that pace affects other horses in the race.* And this task is more difficult with some horses than with others, and especially—though this will not be your case—with idle or lurching horses, which, when leading, require urging by the hand or the leg every yard they go. In this case, the jockey works hard to keep his horse going. He has to use his hands, arms, legs, and feet, and occasionally to turn his head round, with all his limbs in action at one and the same moment, and yet not disturb his horse's action; and all this in addition to great anxiety of mind lest he should upset his horse, and so lose the race. I have heard Frank Buckle say, at Newmarket, that he never knows what it is to be miserable except when he has to make running over the Beacon course, with Sam Chifney and William Clift behind him.'

We will now bring our hero to the post, having profited by the sensible remarks of his trainer so far as to make him aware that he had taken upon himself a hazardous task; but feeling convinced in his own mind that he lost the Welter by not making running, he was now resolved to do so, it being his only chance to win.

'Is your book full, sir?' said one of the betting fraternity to him, as he was about to mount his horse.

'I have no book on the occasion,' was the answer; 'I have not a shilling on the event, except the 500 on the match.'

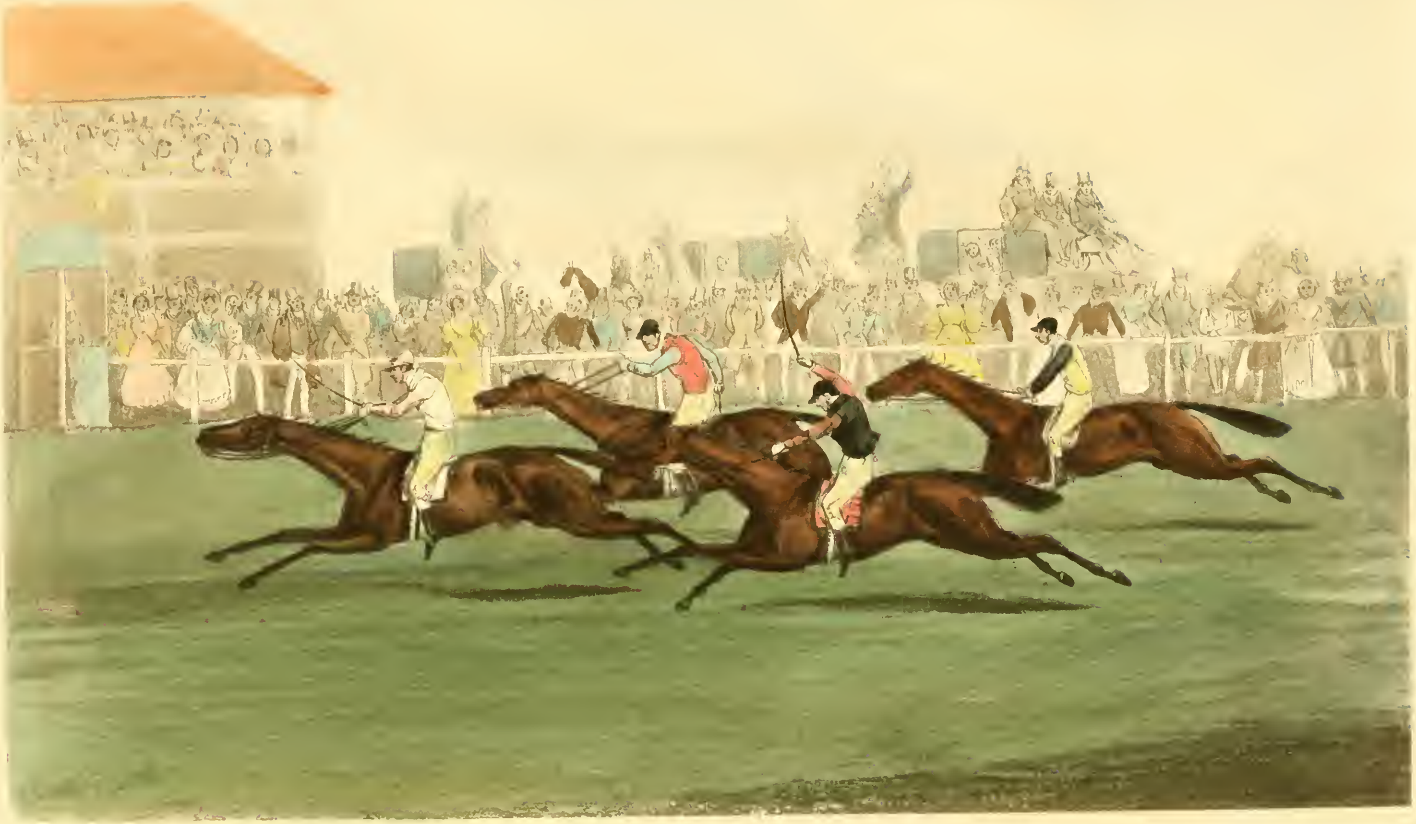
'I'll bet you 6 to 4 against your horse, sir—120 to 80, if you please, sir,' resumed the leg.

'*No*,' answered Raby, in somewhat of a surly tone, and he was immediately lifted into his saddle. As he rode quietly out of the crowd, towards an open part of the course, on which he could give his horse a gallop, he was thus addressed by his trainer:—

'Now, sir, it will be a great event in your life if you can beat this crack horse with so good a jockey as Mr. Burrell on his back. All I can say of your horse is, he is well—better, I think, than he was on Tuesday; and I question whether Antonio has quite forgotten Tuesday's race. Then you will have an advantage to-day, if you mean to make running, which you had not on Tuesday. You will be able to make your turns—and there are plenty of them on this course—without losing ground, which you did on Tuesday among the crowd. But pray, sir, don't forget the *pull* a short distance from home. I have backed you for a hundred.'

'No fear of that,' replied our hero; 'but if it comes to a very near thing at the last, should I use my whip, or only spur my horse?'

'Why, sir,' said Lilly, 'all good jockeys avoid the use of the whip as much as possible. When a race-horse is in the fullest exercise of his powers, and doing his best, it is unnecessary, for it cannot make him do more; but a severe blow from a whip often does harm, particularly if it falls under the flank, which is a very tender place, on account of the thinness of the skin. Instead of its having the effect of making a horse extend himself over a large surface of ground, it may have quite a contrary effect, from his "shutting himself up," as we call it, or shrinking to avoid the blows. The spur, properly used, is a much better instrument for increasing the speed of a horse, although there are times when the application of the whip, or the mere act of flourishing it in the hand, is eminently serviceable to a jockey—I mean, in case his horse swerves to one side of the course or the other, or towards other horses in the race, or exhibits symptoms of running out, or bolting. To be sure, a jockey ought to be able to use his whip with vigour when necessary, and, like Sam Chifney, with his left hand, as well as with his right, in case of his losing what is called the whip hand, when he cannot use it at all with his right. I would, however, recommend you, sir, not to use your whip at all. Yours is a free-going horse; he will run his own race; all you have to do will be to take care not to upset him; and, if it comes to a struggle at the last, try what the spur will do. I tell all young jockeys, especially, that they may do more harm by letting go one hand from the bridle, to use the whip, than the whip does good. Hold your horse hard by the head to the last: shake him by the head to rouse him, if it comes to a near thing, and give him a few digs with your spurs.'



The race for the Welter Stakes.

The crowd at the starting-post evinced the interest which this race created, and several opinions were expressed.

'The young one is a bold man,' said the Prince, 'to attempt to tackle George Burrell, and on a beaten horse.'

'And to refuse the three pounds!' exclaimed a bystander.

'Bring the young one in handsomely, George,' said a third.

'They are off! Ha! ha!' exclaimed an old hand on the turf; 'the young one means to make short work of it.'

'A short life and a merry one,' said another, who had laid 7 to 4 against him in fifties.

'Don't be too sure of that,' exclaimed Lilly; 'the blood of King Fergus and Herod is no bad cross.'

'If he can live that pace home,' said one who had taken the odds, 'he will do: the young one seems to know what he is about.'

In the form in which they started—the young one taking the lead, followed very closely by Mr. Burrell—did they continue this most interesting and, strange to say, heavy betting race for the first mile and a half, our hero being observed to keep a steady pull upon his horse, without the least appearance of having upset him by the severe play he had made, looking back at his opponent, when a good opportunity presented itself, after the manner of an experienced jockey, and sitting as tight and steady on his saddle as though he and his horse were one. At the last turn of the course, a good half-mile from home, alarm became apparent in those who had backed him to lose, and exclamations such as these were heard:—

'The young one's hands are *down*,' says one.

'Yes, and quiet,' observes another.

'I'll bet an even hundred on the young one,' roars O'Hara.

'Done with you,' says Lord Marley.

'I'll bet 6 to 4 on the young one,' roars Nightingale, with a small telescope to his eye; no one answered.

'It's all over but shouting,' exclaims Lilly; 'Antonio's as dead as a hammer.'

Now, then, for the result. The trainer's figure of speech was not carried out to the letter. Antonio was not dead, and only dead beat. In fact, he was beaten in the first mile, but our hero came in a clear length in front, and without stirring a hand, still less a foot. The congratulations of his friends were boundless, as he approached the scales to weigh, and his trainer, Mr. Lilly, seemed as happy as if he had won the Derby.

'This will do,' said he to a friend, as he led Nameless from the scales; '*we shall have this young one another time.* But, upon my soul, he has surprised me; he seems to want no teaching. How like an old one he talks, and how well he rode this race!'

And what said the renowned George Burrell, nearly the best of the Bibury jockeys?

'The Prince was in luck,' said he, 'to win the Welter, with a better horse in the race. Had it been run as this has been run, Nameless would have been a length before us all, and hard held too. He is an extraordinary horse, you may depend upon it. Try and buy him,' said he, in a whisper, to a friend who was by his side; 'he will win the Welter next year, to a certainty. I could not more than live with him the first mile and a half, and as to heading him afterwards, that was out of the question. And he was not badly ridden.'

'Bravo, Frank!' exclaimed Hargrave; 'you won your race in style. Pity is it that you cannot ride lighter, for you would make a capital jockey in a very short time.'

'Who would have thought it?' grumbled O'Hara; 'bad luck to the garran that I backed!'

'Garran!' exclaimed Lord Marley; 'Nameless is the best horse of the year at this weight. I wish he were mine.'

'I beg your pardon, Mr. Raby,' said Colonel Leigh, approaching our hero, as he walked away from the weighing-stand; 'the Prince wishes to know whether you are disposed to part with your horse, and, if so, you will be pleased to name your price.'

'Present my duty to the Prince, sir,' replied Raby, 'and please to tell his Royal Highness Nameless is not for sale. I intend to make a hunter of him.'

'What!' exclaimed Fairfax, who was at his elbow, 'make a hunter of a horse that could have won one of the best stakes in England this year, and is nearly certain of winning it next!'

'He shall never have another plate on his foot,' resumed our hero; 'but I hope to see many a good fox killed, on his back.'

It is written of Alcibiades, the Athenian general, that he gave an entertainment to all the spectators who witnessed the success of his horse in winning the three grand prizes on the Olympic race-course—a snug little party, if we are to credit the accounts given of the multitudes assembled on such occasions. In humble imitation of so memorable an example, our hero gave a dinner, on the evening of his victory over Antonio, at the Bull Inn, in Burford, to a large party of his acquaintances, at which, in newspaper phraseology, 'the utmost conviviality prevailed to a very late hour;' not only, indeed, until the cock crowed on his perch, but until the sun peeped through the blood-red curtains of the bay-windowed banqueting-room of the said Bull Inn. Champagne at a guinea a bottle, and claret at fifteen shillings—the prices charged to some old, and to all young, gentlemen of those days, at race times especially—flowed like water from the limpid stream; and devilled turkey and bishop, after the Christchurch fashion, formed the topping-up of the feast. In short, there was nothing wanted but another Euripides to celebrate the day by an ode.

And what were the topics of the evening? Racing, and nothing else, merely occasionally interrupted by a casual remark on some particular toast. And what the pith of the discussion? Why, that racing was very amusing to those who merely witnessed it, but, to those who engaged in its mysteries, the most uncertain, generally unsatisfactory, and expensive pursuit that a gentleman can possibly enter into. The only exception to this opinion was Fairfax (a hundred thousand pounds the worse now, by-the-bye, in expectation, by his father's proceedings on the turf, as already mentioned in these pages), who declared that he thought every man who possessed money, and a good head for calculation, *must* make money by racing. 'Then the breeding of race-horses,' added he, 'what an interesting pursuit is that!'

'Interesting, indeed,' said Sir John Inkleton; 'but I believe the calculation is a hundred and fifty per cent. loss on all thorough-bred stock, as far as their own intrinsic value is concerned. What they may do when in training is another point, unconnected with the breeding of them; but I believe the calculation is not more than one winner in twenty that come to the post, after all charges are paid. I attended a sale of racing colts a short time back. The two-year colts and fillies averaged ninety-three pounds; the yearlings fifty-seven. Not one of the lot was bred and reared for these several sums. And now, Frank,' resumed Sir John, 'you know you were once nicely diddled by a trainer; are you certain all has been right throughout with Mr. Lilly and Nameless?'

'I have no reason to think otherwise,' replied Frank.

'But why did he tell you to wait on your horses in the Welter race,' continued the Baronet, 'when you found out, by experience of your horse in only one race, that stoutness, and not speed, was the best, and that, had you made running, and *not waited*, you would have won, and cleverly too?'

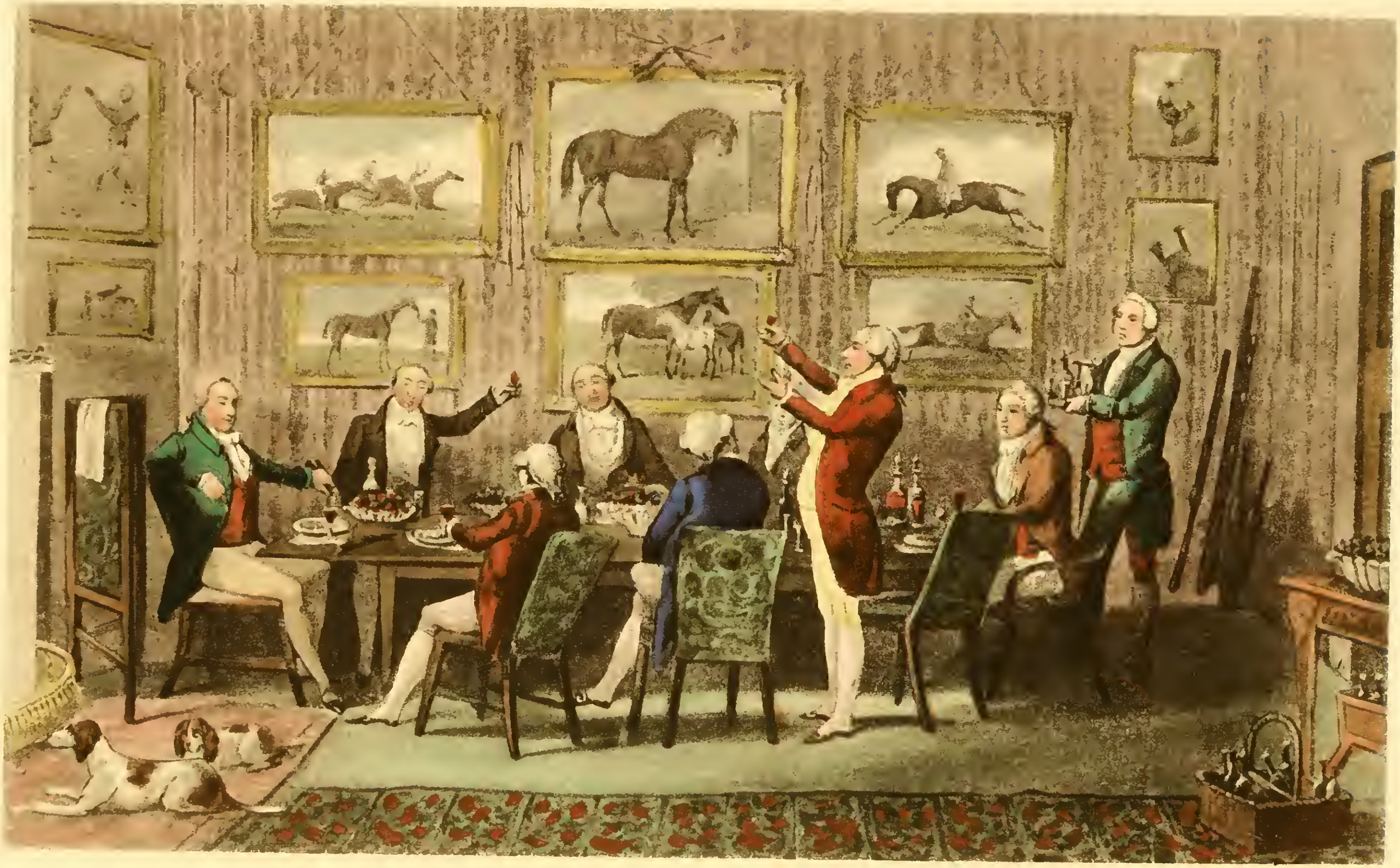
'He must be a fool,' observed our hero.

'No fool,' resumed Sir John; 'his remarks to you on the second day, when he had backed your horse heavily to win, disproves that charge.'

'Then he is a rogue,' said Raby.

'I do not go that length,' said Sir John; 'but it has an awkward appearance, and a burnt child always dreads the fire.'

'Well,' resumed our hero, 'whether fool or rogue, concerns me but little. Before this time to-morrow his bill will be discharged, Nameless will be on the road to Farndon, and my racing career will be at an end. In the first place, I do not understand the system, and I have reason to believe it would cost me a very large sum to learn it. In the next, one pursuit of this nature is as much as any man, situated as I am situated, ought to have on his hands at one time; in my opinion, between hunting and racing there is no difficulty in the choice. In the one, every man you meet with is your friend—in the other, your foe; which a rival either for fame or money must more or less be considered to be. Besides, I am very partial to my coach-box, as well as to the humble but satisfactory pleasures arising from a country life; and, what is more, one day or another I hope to be a master of fox-hounds. I confess I should like to see myself the winner of a Derby, an Oaks, or a St. Leger, because I am of opinion that when once a man enters upon any pursuit, he should not stop until he have



"Fox-hunting for ever!"

exhibited some mark of distinctive excellence; but the odds against my accomplishing either of these hazardous and difficult undertakings are very great indeed. Then again, I think my father is averse to my being on the turf; he often makes his boast that, with the exception of a nomination to a cup at the county races, the name of Raby has never been associated with any gambling speculation whatsoever; and, although you are all aware that I am now independent of him, and must succeed to his estates, should I survive him, I should violate my feelings by doing anything that he greatly dislikes.'

'Bravo!' said Sir John. 'Bravo!' cried Hargrave. 'Fox-hunting and the coach-box against all the racing in the world!' resumed the former. 'Fox-hunting for ever!' exclaimed Hargrave; 'and I vote that we drink it in a bumper.' The bumper was drunk, and the room rang with applause.

On the following day, this meeting closed with six well-contested races for stakes amounting, in the whole, to £1100, which, when looking back to the parent meeting at Burford, when the horses of the Dukes of Marlborough and Beaufort, Earls Abingdon and Ossory, Lords Chedworth and Oxford, Messrs. Vernon, Dutton, Pigot, and Foley, all of high blood, and names renowned on the turf, were contending, at heats, for a fifty-pound plate, shows what rapid strides racing has made within the last seventy years, and also how much the value of money has diminished—at all events, the estimation of it lessened by that description of persons. But nothing in the shape of a race-meeting could have been more delightful than Bibury was at the time in which our hero became a member of the club, composed, as it was, of the first sporting aristocracy of the day, with the heir-apparent to the crown at the head of them, on his cropped roan hack, with merely a pad groom behind him, with his surtout strapped to his back, and discoursing with his associates in all the affability of a private gentleman. And a striking instance of this occurred, as regarded the hero of our tale.

'Introduce Mr. Raby to me,' said his Royal Highness to Lord Solville, as he saw him approaching him on the course: 'he is a fine young man, and I am glad that you have got him into the club.'

The introduction took place on the spot, and the Prince thus expressed himself, in his usual elegantly familiar style, upon this occasion:[1]—

'Well, Mr. Raby, you have made your *début* very much to your satisfaction, and I must tell you, to mine. In the first place, I am glad that you have become a member of Bibury; and, in the next, your trainer gave me the Welter by a false estimate of your horse. You would have beaten me if you had not waited on your horses. However, a jockey should obey orders, you know, Mr. Raby, unless he finds a very good reason for disregarding them. Lilly is a clever fellow, but he certainly made a mistake, which you have great credit for correcting, and entirely on your own judgment. You will be a match for us all in a very short time. And how is your excellent mother? I knew Lady Charlotte Raby well in early days, and once danced a minuet with her. Pray tell her I inquired after her.'

'You do her great honour, sir,' replied Raby; 'I shall carefully obey your Royal Highness's commands.'

'So you are going to make a hunter of Nameless,' continued the Prince.

'I am, sir,' answered our hero.

'And a good hunter he will make,' said the Prince, 'with so good a horseman on his back.'

Our hero bowed, and the Prince moved on.

But a word or two of Lord Solville, who was, as has been stated, at the Prince's side at the moment. The Prince had a horse called Ploughater, that was a most difficult horse to ride. He was not only a determined hard puller in his races, but went very much on his shoulders, with his nose nearly sweeping the ground. It is needless to observe that a horse of this description required a vast deal of riding; and it was said at the time that no member of the club, but Lord Solville, could ride him as he ought to be ridden, and hitherto he had never lost a race upon him. On the third day of this meeting, however, his Lordship rode him to his cost. So great was his exertion in pulling him together, in rather a sharply contested race, that no sooner had he dismounted from his back, than a blood-vessel burst within him. Medical aid was resorted to, and on the next day but one his Lordship appeared on the course, on his hack, with a countenance pale and wan, indicative of the loss he had sustained. But mark the pluck of the man! Ploughater was to walk over for a stake, and his Lordship mounted him for the purpose, despite of the remonstrance of his owner. As it happened, no ill consequences were the result. His Lordship rode as usual at the forthcoming meeting at Bibury, and in a style seldom excelled by the best professional jockeys of the day, and, with a ducal coronet over his head, is now alive and heart-whole, and as good a specimen of an English Duke as England could wish to see. His brother, the Hon. George German, second only to him in the gentleman's racing-saddle, has paid the debt of nature. The gentlemen jockeys of that day underwent all the privations and discipline of those who get their living by riding races; and it has been observed, that the greater part of them have preserved their health and vigour to an extraordinary degree. The preparation for riding races, however, if not carried to too great an extent, is allowed to be most salutary, and there is a passage in Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, in corroboration of this fact. Cyrus never suffered his men to go to their meals, *not having been sweated*. This, it appears, was effected either by taking them out a-hunting, or by inventing such sports as would cause them to sweat.

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[1] There is every reason to believe that the week passed by the Prince, during Bibury meeting, when he felt himself thoroughly divested of the shackles of state and royalty, was to him the pleasantest of the whole year.

On our hero's arrival in London, he found the following letter from his father:—

'My dear Frank,—

'You are aware that it was the earnest desire of your late uncle, and it is likewise mine, that you should occupy a seat in the senate. It will be an admirable introduction into good society, and give you an importance in your own eyes and in those of others, to which, by circumstances, you are entitled. I have reason to believe a very small sum will secure you a seat for the borough of Riply, and I am willing to find the needful. Let me request, then, that you will immediately proceed thither, and my friend Sir Richard Hartley will propose you to the electors, as well as arrange everything that may be necessary towards securing your return for the borough. Observe, it is not *quite* a close borough; but I understand there will be no opposition to any one put in nomination by Sir

Richard. We are all well here. I have heard of your success at Bibury, but know not whether to congratulate you, being no friend to the dangerous pursuit of racing. Out of five of my fellow collegians who have pursued it, three ruined themselves past recovery. Reflect upon this, and let me have your immediate decision respecting Riply.

'In haste, your affectionate father,
'ANDREW RABY.

'Amstead Abbey, June 25th, 1809.'

The following reply to the foregoing epistle was dispatched by return of the post:—

'MY DEAR FATHER,—

'It would ill become me to refuse complying, in any respect, with the "earnest desire" of either my late uncle or yourself. I have only to say, then, that, although I have not the slightest wish to be in Parliament, nor the slightest idea that I shall be of any use when I am there, beyond a silent vote, nevertheless, I am willing to take the step that seems so near to your heart. I will proceed to Riply to-morrow, or next day, and of course you will write to Sir Richard, and arrange *all things* necessary with him. The *on dit* here is, that I am to be opposed by a rich sugar-baker from the city—if so, money will be wanted beyond the mere usual expenses of the return; and I honestly tell you that, after having gained a victory over the second best gentleman jockey at Bibury, I should not relish being beaten by a city sugar-baker over another course—still less to spend my own money in the contest. To use your own words, then, touching racing, "*reflect on this*." Suppose, when we come to the post, it should be 6 to 9 on the sugar-baker, and I hear he is not only very rich, but a very sharp fellow, and can make use of his tongue. All things considered, I had, perhaps, better await the answer to this letter before I set forward to Riply.

'Now then for a word on another subject. You need not longer hesitate as to your offer of congratulation on my success at Bibury. It would have been greater, had I used my own judgment in opposition to that of my trainer, and I should have won the great prize of the meeting, in the room of the Prince of Wales. To show you, however, that I am not vain of my triumph over either horse or man, I have made my bow to the turf, leaving it to those who are better fitted for it than I am—in other words, to those to whose tastes it is more congenial than I have found it to be to mine. There is too much mystery in it to please me; added to a sort of mutual suspicion amongst its votaries, that all are rogues together. That such is *not* the case we are well assured, by the numbers of honourable men who are amongst them; but, to speak the truth at once, I think, compared with fox-hunting, it is a very low pursuit.

'By the way, the mention of the Prince reminds me that his Royal Highness did me the honour to have me introduced to him; passed some compliments on my horse and horsemanship, and in his usual—I believe inimitable—elegantly familiar style, inquired kindly after my mother, reminding me that they had danced a minuet together in their younger days. Glad to hear you are well, and remain

'Your very affectionate son,

'Francis Raby

'Bond Street, June 27, 1809.' ('M.P. in abeyance).

The next day but two having brought the answer from Mr. Raby, to the effect that he would find the needful for the contest, should such take place, adding that he was not to be frightened out of his object by a sugar-baker, wealthy as he might be, and how '*sweetly* soever he might discourse,' Frank Raby ordered four post-horses to his travelling carriage the next morning, and arrived at Riply the same night. On the morrow he called on Sir Richard Hartley, whose fine seat was in the neighbourhood, and the following was the result of the interview:

'Glad to see you at Wortham,' said Sir Richard; 'your father seems bent upon your being in Parliament, and on our borough becoming vacant, wrote to me to know whether you, as a friend and nominee of mine, would walk over the course. I told him, in reply, I thought you would; and as to my interest, he made sure of that, on the score of our mutual regard. I have, however, since learnt that an eminent sugar-baker in the city has a mind to aspire to the honour; and, as he is full of money, he may, perhaps, cause us some trouble.'

'My father has told me as much by letter,' replied Frank

Raby; 'and I must say I am somewhat surprised at his avowal of being prepared to spend money for my return to Parliament, for which I have no desire, and, moreover, I fear I should be of little service to my country when I am there, having no turn for politics.'

'You will not stand alone in that respect,' observed Sir Richard, 'for the business of the country is, and ever will be, conducted by a few; but as the effects of a good education sometimes shine brilliantly when least expected, I see no reason why you are not to take your part in the business of this great country. Your poor uncle Beaumont would have made a first-rate statesman, if he could have aroused himself into action; but want of energy is not *your* failing.'

'Not in pursuits congenial to my taste,' replied Raby; 'no man works harder than I do in the hunting season, but I should not like to be shut up in the House till four o'clock in the morning, and, perhaps, be put on a committee the same day. Then only fancy half a dozen calls of the House in the very best part of the hunting season!'

To cut the matter short, we will at once proceed to the nomination day, and, politics being inadmissible here, merely give an outline of the proceedings, and jump at once to the result. On a show of hands, a majority appeared for Mr. Raby; but the sugar-baker demanding a poll, instantly addressed the electors, and with no small effect. He not only promised them everything that a member of Parliament could obtain for them, but, of course, a great deal more; and what was left undone by his purse, he endeavoured to effect by his tongue. And in truth he was not deficient in the use of it; for, although his eloquence was of a noisy and boisterous order, consisting more in the vehemence of his utterance, and the violence of his action and gesture, than in the elegance of his style, or the strength of his reasoning, he had a readiness of wit, with a kind of low drollery, that took with the populace, although with better judges it only passed for impudence and buffoonery. On the other hand, the appearance and deportment of his opponent were quite of a different order. He simply thanked the electors for the preference they had given him in that, the first stage of the contest—if contest it was about to be—and assured them that, if they did him the honour to elect him, he would endeavour to merit their favour. He concluded his address, however, with this pithy sentence:—

'You have required no pledges from me, gentlemen, and you have done wisely, for none would I have given you. If it be your pleasure to return me to Parliament, as the representative of yourselves and your interests, I will endeavour to do my duty; but I can only consent to be placed there with the liberty to speak my own sentiments, and vote as my conscience directs me. There is, however, one assurance which you may accept as a pledge. I will, to the best of my ability, support the crown, and the ancient institutions of the realm both in church and state, which the example of a neighbouring country, so lately torn by dissensions in each of these departments, has induced many to assail. I am too young in years to appeal to experience, and my reading, rather than my experience, has led me to believe that there is no certain protection for either person or property under democratic sway, and that Great Britain is the only nation in the world where liberty is the direct end of its constitution. I can only add, then, *Esto perpetua.*'

Here voices in the crowd exclaimed—'Go on!—Look at America!'

'Well,' continued our hero, 'I will look at America, and to what can I compare her? Why, to one of those lofty and umbrageous trees which grow so bulky, and stretch out their branches to such an extent, that the trunk is no longer able to sustain their weight.'

'Well done, the young one!' exclaimed an oldish man, in a leathern apron, having somewhat the appearance of a journeyman shoemaker. 'Go on!'

'What were the republics of antiquity?' exclaimed a better dressed man in black, not very unlike a dissenting minister.

'Well,' observed our young candidate, 'I will tell you what *they* were. They were the mature result of profound political science. In their formation, the deepest resources of philosophy were explored; the most enlightened sages consulted; and every aid which history, experience, or example of other states could afford, adopted. It is true, they flourished for periods, under the auspices of consummate wisdom and bravery, but their glory, in many instances, was but short-lived. In fact, it was oftentimes confined to the lustre of a single life. For example, the splendour of Thebes commenced with the public character of the celebrated Epaminondas, and declined from the moment of his death. In fact, the maxims by which their Governments were supported are impracticable in a populous country, such as England. They afford too many opportunities for caballing, and betray the mass of the people into rebellion and outrage. Between the patrician and plebeian orders the struggle is ardent and unceasing, and then look to the result. When the former prevail, despotism ensues; and if the latter succeed, anarchy is the inevitable consequence. Who but a madman would expect to revive the stern politics of ancient nations, without their genius, their extreme austerity, their rigid discipline, and their severe morality? But one lesson is given us in the construction and proceedings of some of those celebrated commonwealths, which were the wonder and admiration of the world for a long period of years. They preserved their purity and vigour, and reached the summit of unrivalled excellence, not only by instituting the best laws, and executing them in the best manner, but by delegating the power of the community to *none but the best men.* Let us not, then, surrender a form of government which has made us happy at home, and respected abroad, for one which cannot, under present circumstances, be realised without having a contrary effect. We should substantiate the fable of chasing Juno, and plunging into a cloud. The old family mansion which our forefathers have inhabited so long, may want repair, but those who would level it with the ground, or change it for another, would soon find their mistake.'

'But the taxes!' says a care-worn elector, the father of eleven children.

'I have an answer for *you,*' said our hero, 'in a few words. Without taxes you could have no protection, because you could have no Government: and with reflecting persons, the opportunities afforded them to rise in the world, in a country whose revenue is so large as ours, are fully equivalent to all they pay. But as to the system of their distribution, complaints will ever be made against it, inasmuch as people are apt to imagine that official duty is never honestly performed but by virtues and abilities above humanity. Now, as you have pressed me to deliver my sentiments, I will tell you what

I consider to be the duty of every public man in these times, whether in Parliament or out. He should lend all the aid in his power to preserve the essentials of the British constitution, yielding to such changes only as are by no means likely to put its safety to the hazard; to repress, as much as possible, that violent propensity to confusion and anarchy which secretly, if not openly, agitates the ignorant and discontented; to soothe the querulous, and encourage the timid, and disappoint and undeceive the daring and ill-intentioned; to guard every man's right, by showing that no claims are paramount to justice; and, lastly, to establish the security of property by encouraging all classes in its defence, and impressing on the public mind this great truth, that life is no longer valuable to any man than whilst he continues in the sure and peaceable possession of what he has a right to call his own.'

'Bravo, Raby!' shouted at least half of those who heard him.

From the commencement of the foregoing address, it is apparent that our hero was by no means anxious for the honour that now awaited him, since he was very sparing of his professions, and indeed, even of his words, until the spur was applied to him. But neither professions nor words were wanting; neither the purse of the sugar-baker, nor his humour, could avail against the deeply-rooted interest of Sir Richard Hartley, who, in addition to owning nearly half of the borough, spent £4000 a year on it; and at the end of the third day's poll, our hero was left to walk over the course, and, consequently, at no heavy expense.

The visit to Sir Richard—a very good kind of man in his way, but of tastes somewhat uncongenial with those of his young guest, and twice his age withal—being one merely of business, and the object of it being attained, Frank Raby was in London again as soon as four posters could convey him, and hailed amongst his acquaintance as the new M.P.

'I would rather be *M.F.*,' said he, to some of his friends who were jeering him; and amongst the hardest hitters of them all was his dear friend Hargrave, who cast these lines in his teeth:—

'Go on, brave youths! till, in some future age,
Whips shall become the senatorial badge:
Till England see her jockey senators
Meet all at Westminster, in boots and spurs;

See the whole House, in mutual frenzy mad,
Her patriots all in leather breeches clad:
Of bets, not taxes, learnedly debate,
And guide with equal reins a steed and state.'

'But, jesting apart,' resumed Hargrave, 'how did you get on upon the hustings?'

'Tipped them "a little jaw," as we used to say at Eton. I meant to have said less than I did say, but one or two of my *constituents*, as I suppose I must now call them, would not be satisfied till they had tried me on a point or two touching my principles, as they are called, but they did not get much by it. I only advised them to be quiet and good subjects, and mind the main chance; and I might have added, mind their own business. For my part, I cannot think what a fellow with a leathern apron before him can know about politics; but this I do know, that if power were to get into the hands of such fellows, the tyranny of a Nero or a Caligula would be a trifle to it. At all events, the natural form of society would be reversed. The bad would usurp the place of the good, the young of the old, the weak of the strong, the foolish of the wise, the poor of the rich, the servant of his master, and the subjects of their sovereign.'

'And did no metaphorical application of the study and science of coachmanship or race-riding escape you?' said Sir John Inkleton, jocosely; 'nothing about holding the *reins* of government with a steady hand, *clogging* the *wheels* of administration, or of other nations *outstripping* us in the *race* of glory? But tell me, Frank, how did your opponent acquit himself?—did he touch on the shop in his speech?'

'Not he, indeed,' replied Frank, 'but he touched on most other subjects, for he spoke for above two hours. In fact, he appeared to pride himself on his eloquence, and to place his chief dependence upon it! Indeed, the opening sentence of his speech—and he might as well have told us that Queen Anne was dead—was this:—"Speech being the faculty which exalts man above the rest of the creation, we may consider *eloquence* as the talent which gives him the most distinguished preeminence over his own species!"'

'Capital!' exclaimed Sir John; 'and what next?'

'Oh,' replied Frank, 'I might as well endeavour to remember last year's clouds. He said a good deal about the dearth of good speakers in the House of Commons, declaring that they drowned the poverty of their conceptions in the excess of fine words, while he himself was dealing out tropes and figures by the dozen, on mere commonplace subjects. But it struck me his favourite figure was the synecdoche, which implies saying one thing and meaning another; for, although he more than once spoke of "our good King George," it is well known he would rejoice to see him dethroned to-morrow, because he refused to make him a baronet. And in the course of his speech he let the cat out of the bag, by quoting from Shakspeare in support of his assertion, that he himself was neither to be bought nor sold—

> . . . "O, how wretched
> Is that poor man, that hangs on princes' favours!
> There is, betwixt that smile we would aspire to,
> That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin,
> More pangs and fears than war or women have;
> And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
> Never to hope again."

'He, however, concluded his oration with a very sensible remark, and which showed that he has looked into books as well as into sugar, and I question whether he might not make a much better M.P. than myself. When alluding to the measures proposed in Parliament, he said, it was the duty of its members, when any great undertaking is proposed, to ask themselves these questions:—"First, is it practicable? secondly, is it consistent with the interest, the honour, and the safety of the country? They should then carefully weigh such points as are likely to make for or against it;—what is to be feared, what to be expected;—what consequences may be the result of ill success, and how such consequences are to be repaired:—lastly, whether the extent of our risk do not more than counterbalance the probable advantages of the enterprise. When deliberating upon these matters, those who address the House should examine the subject thoroughly in every point of view—not only real, but possible. After making themselves masters of it, they have nothing more to do than to set forth those circumstances, and to state their arguments for and against the measure with force and simplicity. Here is no room for displaying beauties, for tickling the ear, or soothing the imagination. This may be called an eloquence *for service*—for which one great man is so distinguished—which, in fact, rejects everything that has more of show than of solidity. All the speeches of Demosthenes to animate the Athenians against Philip of Macedon, are in this strain of vigorous and convincing oratory. In them we find no empty parade of words, no affectation of ornament, no sophistical reasoning. They are rich, not gaudy—brilliant, not glaring—forcing their way to the mind, not by the artifice of insinuation, but by the irresistible energy of truth." '

'Upon my word,' observed the Baronet, 'I am myself inclined to think the sugar-baker would be the most useful man of the two: those are good business-like ideas of his, which you have just quoted.'

'I think so too,' replied our sporting M.P., 'and wish that he were in my place, and I had the money in my pocket that my election will cost. It would just make my stable complete.'

'Is it not already complete?' observed Sir John; 'are not eight good hunters enough for you?'

'Certainly not for Melton,' resumed Raby; 'and I hope to be settled there next winter, at all events the following one. Nothing under a stud of twelve will do there, and I hope to have fourteen. I have no idea of being seen kicking my heels in Melton streets, when others are out with hounds: and such would be the case if I had a short stable of horses, with hounds every day within reach.'

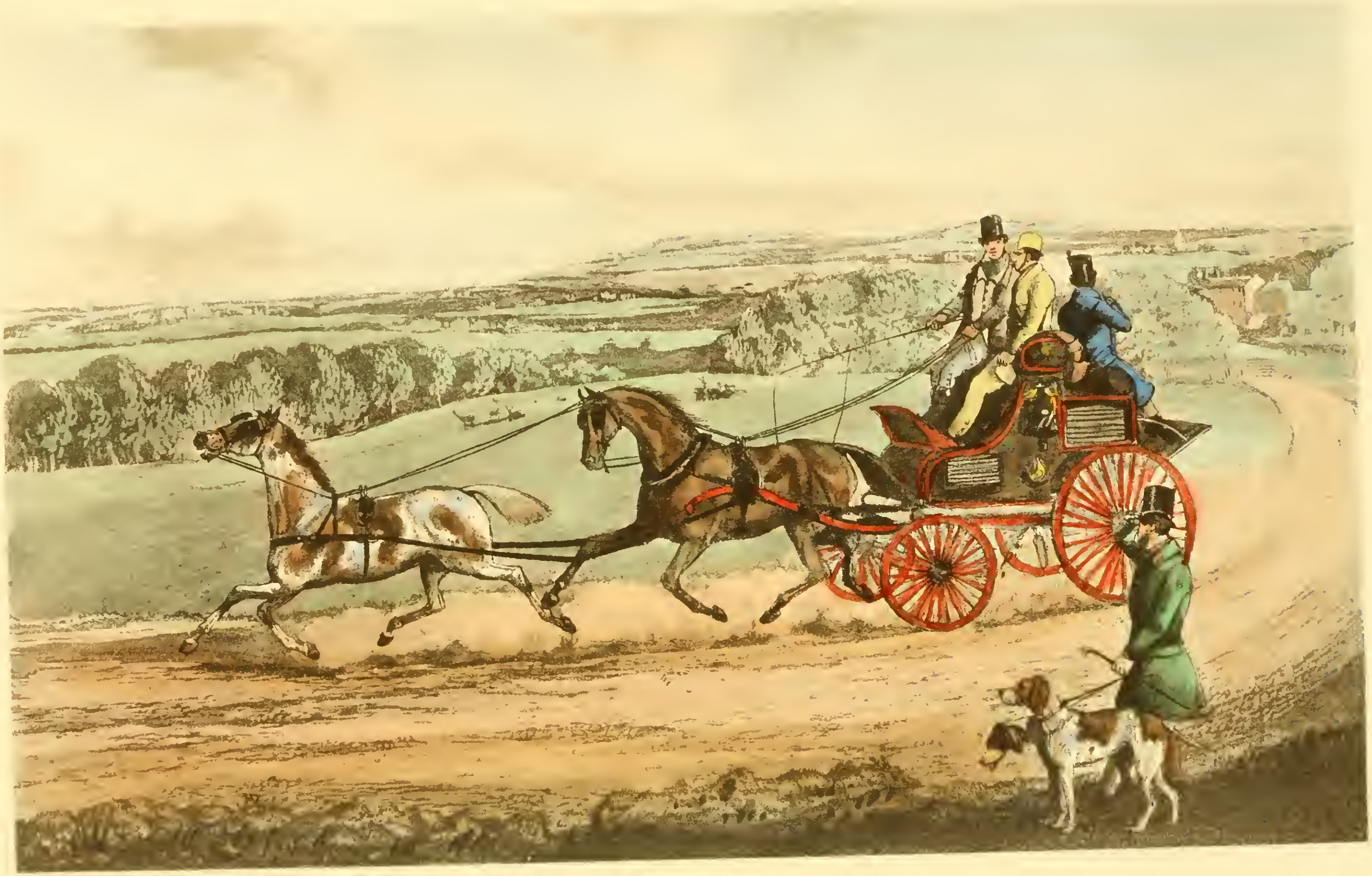
'You will outrun the constable,' said the Baronet.

'No fear,' answered Frank; 'I shall live quietly in the country in the summer, to provide for the winter campaign; and as I have given up the turf, and never play for a sixpence, my income will stand the brunt.'

'But Parliament!' remarked Hargrave—'that will be a pull. You must be a good deal in London.'

'Not much of that,' replied our patriot—'at least as little as I can help. I shall leave such matters to wiser heads than mine. What would my opinion be worth on the affairs of the Elector of Bavaria, or the convention with Russia?'

Parliament not assembling till the usual period, it did not interfere with the present views of its new member, and when it did meet, nothing further was heard of him than that he



The tandem

had taken the oaths and his seat. The summer, however, was not wasted by him in the doubly-heated atmosphere of London: but, by the first day in July, he was comfortably settled again at Farndon Hall, with a select party of friends, enjoying the pleasures of the coach-box, together with fishing and cricket, until he took his departure for the Highlands, as he had done in preceding years. On his return, in addition to the usual pastime of the trigger during the months of September and October, he entered upon another pursuit, though it did not prove to his liking. Having what he considered a fair kennel of greyhounds, he became a member of a coursing meeting, and contended for some of the prizes. Neither was he unsuccessful; his dog, Champion, having particularly signalised himself in several severe courses, and was the winner of two cups. But coursing was not to his taste, sufficiently so, at least, as to induce him to enter into it as a science, and without doing so he considered it must be time thrown away in following it, unless for the sake of what is called the parson's course—namely, 'the hare at the end of it.' This, however, his keeper was able to provide for him. But he had objections to coursing on several grounds. First, the prodigious number of rules and regulations to be observed —at least considered necessary to be observed—in the running of each course, naturally causes disputes, by the difficulty of observing them—to the satisfaction of the loser especially. All emulative pursuits, he said, produce excitement: but he contended that he witnessed more anxiety in the owners of greyhounds, when the contest has been for a cup, than in those of race-horses running for the Derby or St. Leger. The difficulty of having the course fairly decided is the chief cause of this excitement; and a more trying situation than that of the tryer or judge of a first-rate coursing meeting is not often experienced. Secondly, the system of breeding and training greyhounds is so refined that, to excel in each, a man's whole attention should be given to it. At the end of the third year, then, of his keeping greyhounds, he had a sale of them at Tattersall's, where they fetched as good prices as could be expected from the kennel of so young a sportsman as our hero. The history of Champion, however, proved remarkable. He became the sire of more good greyhounds than any other dog of those days; indeed, it was asserted of him, that he could produce good runners from very inferior bitches. This was a pleasing reflection to our hero, inasmuch as it showed that, so far in life as he had gone, he had more or less succeeded in whatever pursuit he had engaged in; and in the fly-leaf of his greyhound book, in which the pedigree and performance of each dog were very accurately entered, were the following remarks, written with his own hand:—'Although many kinds of dogs are as long as the greyhound, yet, from the many curves and circles which he describes in his shape, he excels all in his strides.

'Fine greyhounds, like fine horses, have a general proportion, and a certain elegance of parts; they abound in muscle, have great length for their height, have their hocks let down to the ground, behind, and standing from them, which greatly increases the angle, have the muscles of the thigh remarkably broad and expanded, with great strength of back, and to supply the want of a long pastern-joint—which speedy horses have—their feet and toes are longer than those of any other dogs. They also resemble the hare in the declivity of the shoulders, and length and strength of the hinder legs, as well as the development of muscle in the loins. In fact, were their frame to be put to the test of geometrical science, I know not in what respect it could be improved as regards the united faculties of speed and endurance.'

Two things will have been observable in the progress of this history—if history it can be called: one, that our hero, although occasionally running riot a little, like a well-bred young hound just entered to his game, possesses an amiable disposition, a feeling heart, and strictly honourable principles, early inculcated in him by his father, his uncle, and Mr. Egerton, which could not fail to guide his conduct through life. The other, that Sir John Inkleton has been, from the first—although perhaps the encourager by his example of too expensive pursuits, namely, the coach-box and fox-hunting—a kind friend to him, by giving him the benefit of his experience in several worldly matters, as likewise in now and then checking the ardour of a youthful mind, conscious that, one day or another, gratification, to almost any extent, would be within his reach. Instances in proof of each of these positions are now about to appear.

'What are your plans, Frank, for the winter campaign?' asked the Baronet, who paid him a visit at Farndon Hall.

'I shall go to Melton,' replied Frank.

'Pause for a moment,' resumed Sir John, 'before you determine upon that step. Recollect, the state of your stud is not equal to it at present, neither should I think is that of your purse, as you have laid out large sums in purchasing your carriages and coach-horses, furnishing your house, stocking your cellars, etc.'

'But I can borrow what I may from my solicitor, until that little estate in Hertfordshire is sold,' replied our hero.

'Take my advice,' resumed the Baronet; 'do not borrow from your lawyer. Lawyers are necessary agents to men of property; but the more independent we are of them, the better chance have we of their doing us justice; and it would not be worth your while to raise money in any other way, until that estate is sold. And, mind, I do not blame you for your intention of selling it, since a small property like that, in a distant part of the country, is not worth keeping; and the purchase-money will not only give you a still better start in the world than you have hitherto had, but, by enabling you to have your income clear, so as to pay your way as you go, you will save twenty per cent. upon everything. Let me advise you, then, to defer your visit to Melton for one more year.

'But my house and stables, Inkleton; what must I do about them?' exclaimed Frank. 'I shall have the rent to pay, and nothing for my money!'

'You will have nothing to pay,' resumed Sir John; 'Holding will take the whole off your hands.'

'Sir Frederick, or his brother?' inquired our hero.

'His brother,' replied Sir John; 'and as you have often said you should like to take what you call a tour of hunting countries, I should recommend you to select this winter for the purpose. As you avow your intention of keeping hounds yourself, you may profit much by the plan I propose. You will be able to observe closely the conduct of both masters and servants in the several countries you visit, profiting by what is good, and marking what you may consider to be the reverse.'

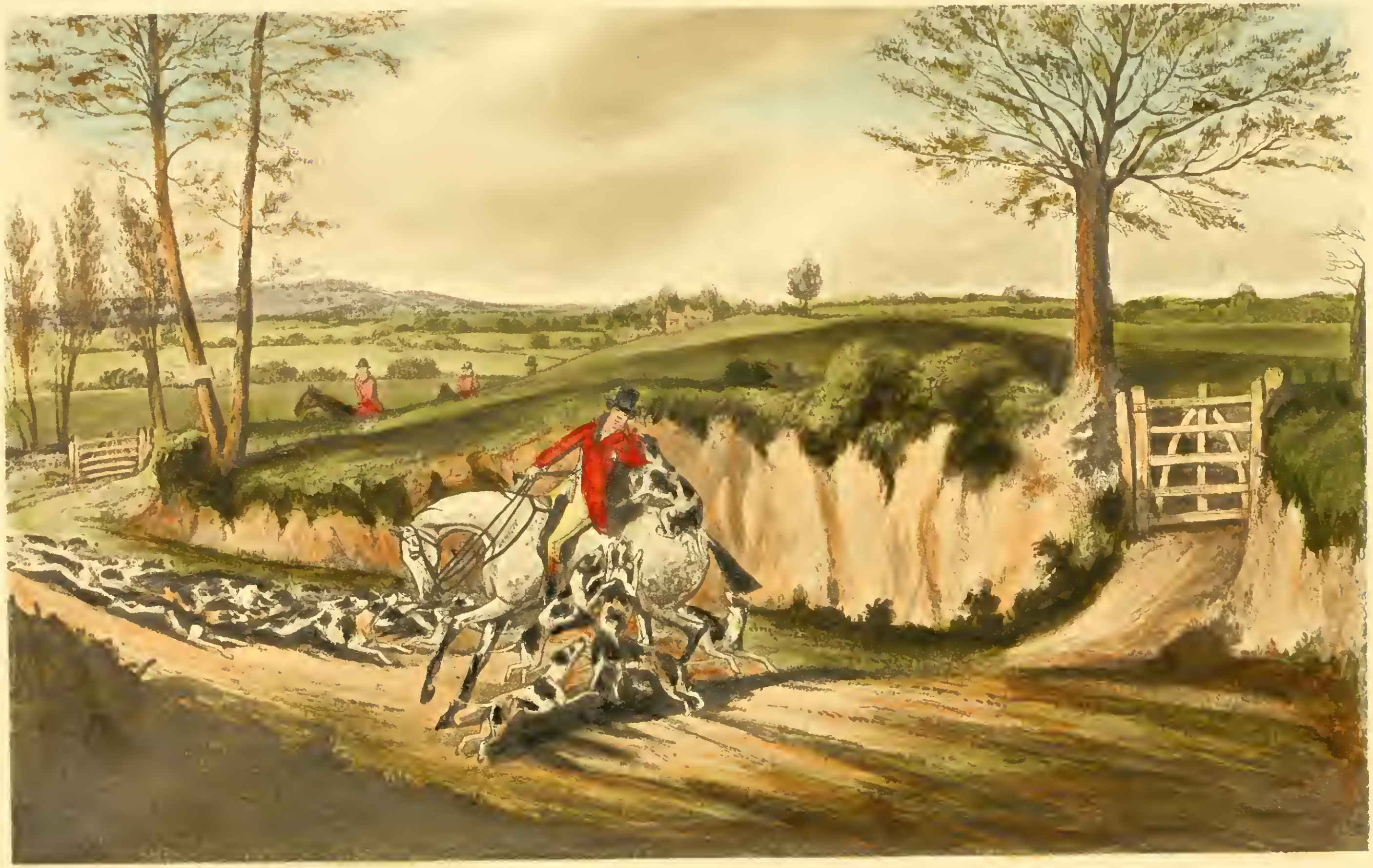
'Your advice is good,' replied our hero; 'I will at once act upon it. In the first place, I shall be quite at ease in my mind, from the reflection that I shall not be drawing too fast on my banker; and, in the next, I shall no doubt profit by what I see in various countries, and in the various sportsmen whom I shall meet in them.'

Shortly after this conversation took place, Frank Raby commenced his tour, fixing upon Cheshire as his start, and for this very good reason: he was informed that the hounds which hunted the country were at that period under the management of a first-rate sportsman of the school of that day, no other than George Horne, whose family had been long seated in this aristocratic country. Nor was he misinformed on this subject: he found a most effective kennel of hounds, with a truly scientific sportsman at their head, and he also found—the surest test of merit—that his blood was sought after in some of the first establishments of those days. But for the country he could not say much. Having had a taste of Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, and Warwickshire, he found himself cramped, as it were, in the small fields of Cheshire; neither were some of his horses at all calculated for its fences, which were, for the most part, hedges placed on narrow banks, or 'cops,' as they are called there, strengthened by a deep and often blind ditch. This kind of fence not only requires a practised horse, very quick and ready with his legs, as he must spring from the cop, when the ditch is on the landing side, but it also requires a practised and good horseman to get him over it with safety, when he becomes what is termed 'pumped out' by the pace. Temper, likewise, and that of a peculiar nature, is almost indispensable here; that is to say, the courage and resolution so desirable in horses who have to face the thickly-set thorn fences of the countries we have just alluded to, are the reverse of what is wanting here. Extreme steadiness is required—amounting, indeed, to slackness—at the generality of the fences we have been describing; and it being the lot of our hero to have only two of his stud (which consisted of eight hunters and two hacks) possessing these qualities, he never went out without a fall. But he profited by these mishaps in more ways than one. Before he had been a month in the country, his horses were up to every description of trap, in the first place; and, in the next, he acquired some excellent lessons on the use of the bridle hand from some of the best men in the Hunt; and from none more to his edification than from one whose calling confined him to the use of the black coat: this was the Rev. James Tomlinson, quite the crack man of the field, being a horseman of the very first class, and a good sportsman withal. Our hero was delighted as well as edified by the manner in which this gentleman crossed this cramped and difficult country, conceiving him to be a man who would shine in any country, forasmuch as he combined quickness with his judgment of every point relating to hounds; and his hand was equal to anything. His stud was not large—not exceeding half a dozen; but, when disposed to sell, they commanded any price.

It has happened to most men who have ridden after hounds—although not perhaps more than once in their life—to feel a horse take what is called a second spring when in the air. This circumstance occurred one day to our hero, when hunting with the Cheshire hounds, and on mentioning the subject to Mr. Horne, he thus delivered his opinion upon it:—

'I have experienced this extra exertion in a hunter more than once,' observed Mr. Horne, 'but I admit the difficulty of accounting for it. Leaping commonly takes place on a fixed surface, which possesses the power of resistance, in consequence of its firmness; still, leaping, as we know, can be performed, to a certain degree, from a yielding surface, although the retrograde motion of the surface produces a diminution in the velocity of the leap, compared with that which is made from firm ground. However, here is a fulcrum to spring from in each case; but how a horse, having once made his spring, has the power to increase the velocity of it, is difficult to account for, unless, as is the case with serpents, and such aquatic insects as have long bodies and no fins, he have the power of inflecting the body to a certain extent, and thence acquire an impetus. Swimming and flying are leaps which take place in fluids, but they are produced by the resistance these fluids make to the impulse of certain surfaces, through which swimming or flying animals move with great rapidity; but the velocity is necessarily great in proportion to the variety of the medium. The muscles which produce it require, therefore, a force vastly superior to that which is necessary for a single leap upon a solid surface; but there is still another requisite for motions which take place in fluids, which the horse does not possess. The body being entirely surrounded by these media, would find an equal resistance on all sides; and the velocity acquired by striking the fluid posteriorly, would soon be overcome by the quantity that must be displaced anteriorly, if the animal had not the power of considerably diminishing its surface immediately after it has struck the fluid—which power, also, the horse has not. I certainly was indebted for the preservation of some of my limbs, perhaps my life, for an exertion of this sort, which enabled my horse to clear a sawpit that was on the landing side of a fence I rode at. One who saw me exclaimed—"Why did you not look before you leaped?" when a wag answered him in the words of Horace—"*Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sawpit.*"'

The next pack visited by our hero was that of Sir Richard Puleston, who hunted parts of Cheshire, Shropshire, and North Wales, and his object for so doing was this:—he had been informed, by more than one good judge, that Sir Richard was an excellent breeder of foxhounds; in fact, that he had done much towards ridding them of those coarse points which, whilst they disfigured them, were found not to be essential to strength and endurance, but evidently impediments to speed. Then he had another motive for visiting Sir Richard's pack. He was at that time one of the very few masters of foxhounds who hunted his own hounds, and, as he hoped some day or another to hunt a pack himself, he was anxious to see a gentleman placed in that difficult and trying situation. Nor was he disappointed in Sir Richard, who exhibited very good judgment in his casts, and drew for his fox in a manner very much to his taste. Had he, indeed, ridden a little nearer to his hounds in chase, he would have called him a first-rate huntsman. The next pack, however, which our young sportsman went to see, on his tour, were hunted by quite a first-rate huntsman, and also in the character of a gentleman. We allude to Mr. Musters, who at that time hunted one of the best of the midland counties with very great *éclat*. He combined, in the opinion of our hero, every possible requisite for his task. He was a beautiful and bold horseman; with a voice musically melodious; with the eye of a hawk to his hounds and country,



Mr. Musters hunted by his hounds.

and with a sort of intuitive knowledge of the usual lines in which his foxes ran, to an extent not hitherto witnessed by him. And the following rather curiously drawn portrait of him was given to him by a friend.

'It is in the field that Mr. Musters shines. Birds, we are told, cannot conceive with beasts, nor fish with fowl, but dogs, to an extent, certainly conceive with men, and some persons have a peculiar method of making their wishes known to them. At the head of these is Mr. Musters. In command of hounds I never saw him equalled, and he certainly handles them with a master's hand. Every art has its peculiar terms, and his language and method in the field are most appropriate. In fact, he may be said to suit the action to the word, and the word to the action, with the greatest possible effect. By temperament of constitution, also, he is particularly fitted for a huntsman; for, being never fatigued, he is always cheery and gay. To sum up all, *although a gentleman, he is a huntsman.* Nature qualified him for the task, and without this, it is in vain to attempt it. As Ion says—

> "What's the gay Dolphin when he quits the waves,
> And bounds upon the shore?"'

But a singular instance of his powers over the wills and affections of his hounds was related to our hero by one who had long hunted with him; and what renders the circumstance still more extraordinary, is the fact that Mr. Musters does not feed his own hounds in kennel, as most huntsmen (servants) do. 'His hounds were on their road to sleep out, previously to the next day's hunting, the fixture being a distant one, and he himself was likewise on his road to dine and sleep at a friend's house. It happened that, as his own house was four miles from the kennel from which the hounds had started, he did not travel in their line for a certain portion of the road: but, knowing that he must cross it at a certain point, he pushed on his hack, to enable him to get ahead of them. When, however, they came into that part of the road over which he had just gone before them, despite of the endeavours of the whip to restrain them, every hound in the pack started off, and overtook him in the space of a mile. Neither could their joy on reaching him be restrained; they surrounded his horse, and one actually leaped on his quarters, for the purpose of licking his huntsman's face.'

There was another eminent sportsman in that country, whom Frank Raby was anxious to see, and that pleasure was afforded him. This was Sir Charles Knightly, one of the most fearless and determined horsemen of the period to which we allude. On two thorough-bred horses—Benvolio and St. Maronel—which he rode for several seasons, he went straighter, perhaps, than any other man over the country in which he hunted, and which was one of the strongest in England as to fences, and this fact is confirmed by the following declaration on his part. On some one observing, in his presence, that the country in which he hunted was very strong, but that the difficulty of crossing it was, to a certain extent, lessened by the number of bridle-gates, he coolly replied, that *the only fault he found with it was in the number of bridle and other gates* with which it abounded. 'I wish,' said he, 'every gate in the country was nailed up, and then my hounds would not be incommoded by the crowd.' He was not a master of hounds at the period to which we allude, so that our hero had not an opportunity of observing him in that capacity, but he took several lessons from him in the practice of riding to hounds.

'The straightest road is the best and easiest for your horse,' he would say, 'until the hounds turn, when you should always get a point in your favour, by being a little beforehand with them at that moment.'

Then a great treat was afforded to our young sportsman, in witnessing a day with Mr. Musters, in the very celebrated woodlands of the country his hounds hunted. Strange to say, they are dissected by avenues to the extent of seventy miles, in various directions; and being the property of a noble Duke, himself a master of foxhounds, are never short of foxes. He was fortunate in seeing a fox made to break from them by the surprising energies of Mr. Musters, and, after facing the open country, being up at his death, at the distance of twelve miles, as the crow flies.

Moving on, in his tour, our hero visited the Hertfordshire hounds, then the Hampshire, and afterwards the Vine, with each of which he saw some really good sportsmen, from several of whom he gathered golden opinions, which served his purposes through life. The scene of action with each of these packs lying in what may be called very unfavourable ground for hounds, was his chief motive for visiting them, forasmuch as it is in the overcoming of difficulties that talent most strikingly displays itself. He witnessed much science in all that related to the Hertfordshire, their huntsman being a first-rate performer, assisted by as clever a whipper-in as ever rated a hound; and in the 'Hampshire' pack, from Alpha to Omega, all appeared to him to be perfect. In fact, he found, as a friend of his told him he would find, a propriety attending that establishment, as well as correctness of conduct in everything relating to it, which are highly gratifying to a sportsman's eye, and which cannot be too closely imitated. The civility and respectful behaviour of the servants were beyond all praise; and whether by command of their master, or from their own sense of propriety, it was not in his power to determine, but an oath, or a coarse expression of any sort, was never heard to escape them under the most trying circumstances that occurred. It showed that fox-hunting was about to be purged of the only stain that was then attached to it, namely, being the scene of wanton disregard of the usual decorum of society.

Of the Vine hounds he thus wrote to his intimate friend and brother sportsman, Hargrave:

'I am now hunting with a pack called the Vine, so called because such is the name of their owner's house, he representing the county in Parliament. He has the appearance of anything rather than a master of foxhounds, streaming across the country with a long pig-tail down his back, but he is very popular with all descriptions of persons. But it is of his hounds that I wish to speak. They are very small—the smallest I ever saw—but very neat, very fast, very quick in their turns, and very stout. I shall have an eye to some of their blood, one day or another. They have a bad, light-scenting country to hunt over, which puts their goodness to the test.

'You often hear me speak of my weight, and grumble about it. I shall do so no more, because I see that men, four stone heavier than I am, can go well up to hounds. When I was in the Hertfordshire country, I saw this proved in the person of one of the most extraordinary men, perhaps, England ever produced. His name is Richard Gurney—commonly called Dick Gurney—and, although riding eighteen stone, he goes the best pace. In fact, a short time since, I went to see a gate that he and Sir Charles Knightly—but no one else—leaped, near Northampton, at the end of a twenty minutes' burst. It appeared to me next to a miracle that he could have cleared it, when I looked at its height, and thought of his tremendous weight. The name of the horse that performed it is Cock Robin (winged, I should imagine, like his namesake), and he had refused 1000 guineas for him.

'The frost is gone at last, and to our no small delight. Indeed, the breaking-up of one always reminds me of the inhabitants of those countries from which the sun absents himself for half a year. Speaking poetically, when they see the chariot of Diana, every man claps his hands for joy; all come forth from their caves, with dancing and songs, to welcome the approach of that beautiful goddess. But you may wish to know what I did with myself during the frost. I visited London for a week, and afterwards ran down to Amstead, and had a capital week's shooting, killing seventeen couples of woodcocks, eleven and a half brace of pheasants, seven and a half of snipes, and eleven of rabbits. I then ran down to Quorn to see the hounds in kennel, and a great treat I had. The master was from home, but I inspected the whole establishment, which, to use the low expression, "made my mouth water," and I said to myself—when shall I be qualified to be at the head of such an establishment as this? I was answered by the inner man, with a still lower expression—"when you have eaten a good deal more pudding." But I tell you, honestly, Hargrave, I shall never consider myself completely happy until I become a master of foxhounds. By the bye, one piece of information gleaned at Quorn somewhat surprised me, and this was, the comparatively small number of foxes killed in the space of five seasons, during what may be called the prime of Mr. Meynell's career. The account stands thus:—From 16th of August, 1791, to April, 1792, thirty-four brace. From 16th of June, 1792, to 9th of April, 1793, forty-one and a half brace. From 16th of June, 1793, to 2nd of April, 1794, forty-six and a half brace. From 23rd of August, 1794, to 4th of April, 1795, twenty-six and a half brace. From 26th of August, 1795, to 4th of April, 1796, thirty-four and a half brace. This, you will perceive, averages little more than thirty-six brace in the season, including cub-hunting, and that commencing more than usually early.

Either the foxes must have been more scarce than they now are, to account for this trifling amount of blood; or, what I think most probable, they were wilder and more difficult to kill in Meynell's days, the country itself being wilder and more open than it now is.

'The kennels and stables at Quorn are superb, and you must see them soon. Exclusive of boxes, there is one stable which holds twenty-eight horses, and so contrived by a trifling deviation from a right line, that, although all the horses appear to stand in a row, the quarters of each are to be seen at either extremity of the building. A clean watering-bridle hangs on the stall-post of each horse, and there is a patent lamp between every six. This is all very fine as far as the eye of man is concerned; but for the welfare of the horses I should prefer smaller stables, so as to divide the lot according to their several necessities. Horses require a state of extreme quiet at times, which they cannot enjoy in a stable occupied by so many. Some require to be shod; others are in physic, and most go out more than once in the day: and many such occurrences tend to disturb repose, which should be plentifully allowed to hunters after hard days, as a great restorative of their powers, as well as a preventive of fever.'

Towards the close of the season, another letter was dispatched by Frank Raby to his friend Hargrave, of which the following is part:

'My tour of hounds is now drawing to a conclusion; but I cannot wait till I see you for the pleasure of relating to you a run I saw yesterday, in the Atherstone country. The beautiful pack of bitches met at Sibson. The morning was immoderately stormy, and, as far as human foresight extended, perfectly inimical to scent and sport; but the result proved how fallible is human judgment! We drew the wolds, and Welsborough Gorse blank. We then proceeded to Sutton Hambion, and the hounds had scarcely been in the cover a minute before the electric sounds of "Tally-ho!"—"Gone-away!" were audible, and the fox broke in the most gallant style. The moment the hounds were laid on the scent, it was evident we were in for a run; and away they went, with heads up, and sterns down, to Bosworth, where the hounds, and a few of the first-flight men, got a view of the fox. It was but a peep, however, and away we went again, the hounds appearing bent upon conquest—the pace up to this moment having been a *flying* one. He then made his line for Kirkby, leaving the Gorse to the left, as if Burbage Wood were his next point; but the hounds pressed him so hard, that he went farther a-field; and, to come to the end of my story, he was killed at the end of one hour and fifty-five minutes, during which time nothing occurred which could be called a check. The country being awfully deep, and the pace throughout fast in the extreme, several disasters occurred, and veterinary surgeons were in request, on the morrow, in more directions than one.

'By the bye, I do not recollect having told you that I hunted one week in Yorkshire, with the hounds of the far-famed Earl of Darlington. He has a noble establishment of hounds and horses, a most extensive country, and he performs the office of huntsman both in the field and in the kennel. He is a superb horseman over a country as well, and altogether a sportsman, being one of the leading men in the north on the turf. He is, likewise—for I had the honour of passing two days with him at his castle—one of the most lively and agreeable companions I ever met with over a bottle of claret, abounding with anecdotes, and having a most agreeable manner of relating them. What think you of his feeding his hounds *in a smock-frock*? which I saw him do twice. I hope some day to do the same by mine, that is, when I have them to feed. His Lordship always keeps a diary of each day's sport, written with much spirit, and showing that his heart and soul are in the pursuit. I will give you a little specimen of his style, in recording the sport of the first day on which I was out with his pack. Speaking of those of his field who went well in the brilliant run we had, of an hour and forty minutes, he says—"I cannot omit to mention that the Rev. Mr. John Morton shone as conspicuously on his grey mare as he always does in the pulpit." Then, speaking of myself, his Lordship has thus described me:—"A young gentleman by the name of Raby, a friend of my eldest son, who made his acquaintance at Melton, was out with us this day, and rode well to my hounds; he appears to have an old head upon young shoulders, and I prophesy that he will, some day or another, make a distinguished sportsman."

'His Lordship did not show me what he had written; but as we like to hear what is thought of us by people whose opinion is worth having, I took a peep into the book next morning, and was of course flattered by the handsome mention made of me. I certainly never rode better to hounds than I did that day over a cramped and difficult country, but I chanced to ride Achilles, who is up to all sorts of trap. There was, however, one fence which I did not attempt, although many of the Yorkshire horses did not appear to regard it: this was a stile in the shape of the letter V, consequently without a top bar to guide the eye of a horse as to how high he is to leap. One, not accustomed to this sort of fence, would be induced to leap *through* it, in which case he most likely would be caught.

'You will expect that I shall say something of the hounds. They are divided into two packs, the large and the small one. The large hounds are noble animals, and good hunters: but—and I saw both packs at work, and in difficulties—I gave the preference to the small ones, which appeared more handy and quicker. It is altogether, however, a splendid and truly sportsmanlike establishment.'

The summer succeeding the period which we have now been detailing the operations of, having been passed in a way, for the most part, to the full satisfaction of our hero—namely, in the enjoyment of the London season up to a certain period, a trip to Brighton, a visit to his friend Hargrave, Epsom and Ascot races, Bibury Club meeting, together with his 'parliamentary duties'—although he was getting somewhat out of conceit with being a member of the British senate, having been twice obliged to absent himself from a favourite fixture for hounds to obey a call of the House, and once had a visit from the sergeant-at-arms for not obeying it: when all these momentous affairs were accomplished, he hastened to Farndon Hall, to spend the rest of the summer in a way more congenial to his taste. His coaching establishment was now quite complete by some changes he had effected in London. He had drafted the kicking wheeler; as well as a leader that would not stand still when he pulled up his coach on the road, and he was a bad starter as well. Having witnessed much of the performances of some of the best gentlemen-coachmen of the day, during his stay in London, he was become a first-rate artist himself; and, after the example of his friend, 'His

Honour,' by opening the door of his servants' hall to such of the coachmen and guards on his road as required a few days' rest, together with having their allowance scored up to him in his village, through which three mails and seven coaches passed daily, his name was known to nearly all the fraternity of the whip as a kind-hearted gentleman, and among the best friends of the road. He was, indeed, universally respected by all ranks of persons in his neighbourhood; neither was he unmindful of the poor; allowing those of his parish, besides occasional assistance, a bushel of wheat a week throughout the year, as his father had always done to double that amount. Then a pleasing circumstance occurred on the anniversary of his taking up his abode at Farndon Hall. Setting aside the outlay of his carriages and horses, as likewise the furnishing of his house, he found himself so far from being in advance of his annual income, that there was a balance of £1300 in his favour. To this he was indebted partly to his own sense of propriety, partly to the excellent advice of his friend Inkleton, and greatly to his having looked into his affairs at the end of each month, and paid ready money for all minor wants. The little estate in Hertfordshire, also, from its beautiful locality, had been sold for nearly £2000 beyond the calculation of his agents, which tended further to place him 'on velvet,' that is to say, with everything in his reach that a man of moderate views could desire. '*Now,*' said he to himself, 'I am qualified to hunt from Melton.'

CHAPTER XVII

Frank Raby becomes a regular Meltonian; loses his father, and finally settles down as a master of foxhounds, the point of honour in the Life of a Sportsman.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that the first week in the succeeding November found our hero at Melton Mowbray, occupying the house which he had already tenanted for upwards of two years, and with his stud increased to fourteen hunters and two cover hacks. And his indoors establishment was this:—at the head of it was his trusty butler, who had lived nearly all his life with his late uncle, and consequently, having known him in his childhood, was attached to his person and interests beyond mercenary views, and who kept all his accounts; his own personal servant, or valet, skilled in the art of clothes-cleaning, and especially in the department of the boots, then only in its infancy; a French cook, with the highest attestations of his abilities from Lord Edmonston, with whom he had lived, and who had 'parted with him for no fault,' as the horse-chaunter says in his puff of the patched-up screw; an English kitchen-maid of no slender qualifications, without which no man's *cuisine* is complete; his housekeeper, having had her education in the Amstead still-room, under the tuition of Mrs. Jones; a footman and a housemaid bringing up the rear. Here it will be perceived is no wanton prodigality, nor was any such indulged in by our young sportsman. His practice was to give dinners twice a week, to parties of eight, and on the evenings on which he had no engagement, one friend at least would be his guest, to talk over the events of the day. And at no place, except Melton, is there such a never-failing succession of events to be discussed on these occasions, by reason of there being three packs of hounds within reach, and the certainty that out of a party of eight, one attendant, at least, upon each pack, would be found. Having stated all this, there is little room for doubting that—although, perhaps, the knowledge of the *savoir vivre* in our young sportsman was not quite so complete as in some of the *bons vivants* of the day, who had more experience than himself—most of the arts and appliances which render life agreeable to a man in his twenty-fifth year, were to be found in his house at Melton.

But we have said nothing of his stud of hunters, selected for this occasion. By the advice of his friend Somerby, whom he had met in London during the season, an alteration had been effected in them.

'The eight hunters you now have,' said Somerby, 'are all good and useful of their kind; but three of them are not suited for Leicestershire. In the first place, they are not well enough bred for our pace and country; and, in the next, in stable language, they are deficient in *scale* to command and to cover our large blackthorn hedges, with their wide ditches, and more especially the ox fences, which require horses to extend themselves in their leaps over a great space of ground. Let me recommend you to draft all but those three; and as there are two lots of well-known and capital Leicestershire horses coming to Tattersall's in a fortnight, you can then and there replace them, as well as complete the number of your stud. Do not think me conceited in thus characterising the Leicestershire horse; depend upon it, before you have hunted in that country half as long as I have, you will say I have not overdrawn the picture.'

Space will not admit of our accompanying our hero during the whole of his residence at Melton, which continued for nine consecutive years, and where he left behind him a reputation for all that is desirable in the gentleman, the companion, and the sportsman; and the character he gave of it when he quitted it was, that, 'to a sportsman it was the most delightful place upon earth; the very centre and rendezvous of all pleasures, and whatsoever is agreeable to mortals—in truth, to him, an earthly paradise.' There was, in fact, but one circumstance during the entire period of his sojourning there, that produced an unpleasing reflection, but from the relation of it here some good may arise. An unguarded expression from a hot-headed young Irishman, but possessing an equally warm heart—the result, perhaps, of an extra bottle of claret, and *that* the result of a brilliant run in the morning, which, in those days, was too often celebrated with Bacchanalian rites in the evening—interrupted the harmony of a party at which our hero made one; and, as was likewise too often the custom of those days, for the honour of Tipperary, an apology for the offence by the aggressor was declined. A meeting, then, was necessarily the consequence; and our hero, having placed his honour in the hands of an officer of the Guards with whom he became intimate at Melton, was himself, the next morning, placed in array to his antagonist at the distance of twelve paces. On the word 'Fire' being given, the Irishman fired in the air; and—as was evident to both seconds—the pistol of his opponent having been so pointed as to render it *impossible* the ball could take effect, it was, of course, a bloodless affair.

'*Now*, Mr. Raby,' said the Irishman, 'I am ready to take your hand, and declare, upon the honour of a gentleman, that I regret having given you offence.' Anger, like the bee, says Seneca, should sting but once. Our hero took his hand and pressed it, adding, emphatically, these words:—

'My good fellow, let us think no more of what has happened; you have done and said all that I could desire.'

The conduct of Frank Raby was highly approved of on this occasion, having shown himself to be a man of courage, tempered with humanity, which, after all, is the only true courage,[1] as possessing that nice sensibility of honour which weighs the insult, rather than the injury; willing to accept of the slightest atonement for either, and totally incapable of revenge. The situation, however, in which he had placed himself (for his antagonist was a first-rate shot), without the effort to defend himself, and of course ignorant of the intentions of his opponent, became a subject of admiration amongst his associates; and on the arrival of Hargrave, a few days afterwards on a visit to him, the following conversation took place, on their road to meet the hounds:—

'I have heard a good deal said,' observed Hargrave, 'on the subject of your affair with the Irishman: the Melton men—at least many of them—think you let him off too cheaply; that is to say, you, who were the aggrieved, ran the risk of being punished, without the chance of punishing the aggressor.'

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[1] The Greeks used the word 'Αρετὴ to express both what we call valour and virtue.

'No punishment which he could have inflicted upon me,' replied Frank Raby, 'would have been equal to what I should have suffered had I caused his death. I would not have a man's blood lie at my door for any consideration whatsoever. And as for a wish, on my part, to inflict punishment on Fitzmaurice, nothing was further from my mind. He is a good-hearted fellow—a man of licence, indeed, in his words and actions; and I felt sorry afterwards that I took umbrage at what he said.'

'But would not your honour have——'

'Honour!' interrupted our hero; 'I think there is too much stress laid upon this said thing called honour; it appears to be the darling attribute of the present age; but I think it has lost by its acquirements. It is a picture of virtue, perhaps, finely drawn, but, in my opinion, the lines are not just, and the colours are too glaring. These bloody maxims of honour were unknown to the ancients in the best of their times, and why should not we, who boast of our refinement, be unable to live correctly in society, unless under fear of being shot, or compelled to shoot others?'

'Pardon me,' replied Hargrave; 'Antony challenged Augustus!'

'He *may* have done so,' said Raby, 'but that does not prove the custom; and if it did, custom without reason is but an ancient error. I know that there were duels fought in old times, as between the Horatii and the Curatii, and others of still more importance in the eyes of the world; but these duellists were public enemies, a sort of fighting representatives chosen to decide the controversies of their respective countries; there was no cutting of throats to decide private disputes. And as you have mentioned the name of Augustus, what, may I ask, was his answer to Antony on being challenged by him after the battle of Actium? Why that, if he (Antony) was tired of life, there were other ways of his ridding himself of it, and he (Augustus) should not trouble himself to be his executioner.'

'A capital answer,' observed Hargrave.

'Yes,' rejoined our hero; 'and if some man of well-established courage and conduct, in our day, were to return a similar one to another who wished to cut his throat for a mere *lapsus linguæ* over a bottle of wine, or a hasty expression in the moment of argument, he would deserve well of society. Then look closer into the system, and observe the inconsistency of it. A man inflicts upon you the severest possible injury to begin with. Well, you call him out, as the phrase goes, and he finishes by shooting you. Then, although public opinion may be in favour of this private appeal to arms, the punishment by law is equal towards the injured and the injurer; whereas, in strict justice, the latter is the sole instigator, if not perpetrator of the crime. At all events, the laws should be lenient to the man who accepts the challenge, because he acts under an opinion of honourable self-defence, against the evil influence of which the law cannot protect him.'

'Then I perceive,' resumed Hargrave, 'you are a decided enemy to duelling, which I am, indeed, myself, and I often think of the question Fielding makes Partridge put to Tom Jones on the subject: "Is not courage forbidden by heaven?" said Partridge. "Yes," replied Jones, "but enjoined by the world."'

'Then,' said our hero, 'which is the greater authority of the two? Heaven or the world?'

'No question on that point,' continued Hargrave. '"*If it be possible*," says St. Paul, "as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."'

'Yes,' observed Raby, 'and in the next verse he adds—"avenge not yourselves; it is written, *vengeance is mine*."'

The hounds appearing in sight, the subject was dropped, and there is good reason to believe that, as this was the first, so was it the last appearance of our hero on this stage. *Nemo debet bis vexari*, is not a bad proverb for a man to keep in his pocket; but despicable as is the character of a quarrelsome man, and still more so the professed duellist, there is too much reason to fear that some young men think it a feather in their cap, with the female sex especially, to have fought a duel. It is true, Virgil makes Dido fall in love with Æneas, because he is a fighting man. There is reason to believe, however, that, ere long, this pernicious rule, by which society in the upper classes has hitherto been governed, will be made to yield its sway to a more rational tribunal. This would be a reform worthy of an enlightened people.

Two rather interesting incidents have been overlooked during the sojourn of Frank Raby at Melton, extending, as has been observed, over a period of nine years. The first has its origin in an extraordinary run, in which two celebrated sportsmen of those times played extraordinary parts. The fox broke from the Coplow, the hounds getting away close at his brush, and *so straight did he put his head,* that those who did not get well away with them, had no chance to be near them, as there was nothing to be had from a favourable turn. Those, however, who did get away well, had great difficulty in living with the pack, and, dropping off one by one, out of 150 at starting, the field soon became select. But to what did it come at length? Why, to the presence of only two, and even they did not quite see the finish of this glorious run. And there was no deceit here. Coming to a momentary check, one said to the other—

'Look behind you. There is not a living soul in sight!' Nor was there. As there were no second horses in those days, the honours should be recorded to the two who thus distinguished themselves, as well as to their owners who rode them. The name of one was the Clapper, ridden by Mr. Ludlow, of Bibury, as well as of Leicestershire fame; the other by Mr. Smith, honoured by Napoleon as the *grand chasseur* of the day. And where was our hero in this run? He was one of the last lot of five who all pulled up in the same large field, having been, up to that time, brilliantly carried by Topthorn.

The second incident has somewhat of a contrary bearing, inasmuch as it produces rather a rare instance of a sportsman coming at once from a very close and confined country into the spacious and highly-ridged fields of Leicestershire, and distinguishing both himself and his horse. This was the Reverend James Tomlinson, of whom we have before spoken as having excited the admiration of our hero in Cheshire, and whose performance on the day alluded to was the cause of rather a curious *éclaircissement.* Previously, however, to the climax, it should be observed that, in those days, no gentleman, except in the Cheshire Hunt, was seen in the hunting-field clad in leather breeches. Thus clad, however, was Mr. Tomlinson, when the fox broke from his cover, and, moreover, the *gentleman* was still further disguised by a coloured silk neckcloth.

'Who is the *farmer* going so well on the chestnut?' asked one.

'Get his price for me,' exclaimed another. 'He's *mine*, if I give five hundred for him,' roared a third. 'A thousand would not purchase him,' exclaimed Frank Raby, who was within hearing of the trio. 'He belongs to Jemmy Tomlinson, a friend of mine, in Cheshire, and he calls him *The Pea*.'

At the end of the run, however, which 'Jemmy' was there to see, one or two of the field who had not heard the explanation given by our hero, and, mistaking his rider for a yeoman, asked him to put a price on his horse. The answer may be anticipated.

We are now about to notice a great change in the situation and circumstances of our hero. At the age of thirty-six, he lost his excellent father, who died after a few hours' illness, and before his son could reach him, although, of course, sent for by express. To describe the scene of affliction that Amstead Abbey presented on this melancholy occasion, would be productive of no good to the generality of my readers, and, perhaps, bring to the recollection of some of them hours of similar distress. The blow to Lady Charlotte was as severe as it was sudden, requiring all the energies of her soul and body to enable her to withstand its force; but forasmuch as the weight of human sorrow, like that of human power, is broken by being divided, she was not entirely comfortless. Her two daughters, although married, happened to be within easy reach of her at the time; and the presence of her son, of whom she was justly proud, from the accounts she heard of him from all quarters, was balm to her wounded spirit. And we will produce a fact to show that she had not been deceived in the representations of him, and that he was worthy of being the representative of the excellent father of whom he had been bereaved. On the day subsequent to the funeral, which, in addition to his own dependants, was attended by the carriages of all the neighbouring families, and what told more for the virtues of the deceased, by the bewailings of the poor of the neighbouring villages, who had partaken of his fostering care and charity to an unusual degree, she received from him the following letter:

'My ever dear Mother,—

'I should be dead to the common feelings of a man did I not sympathise acutely with the painful situation in which you are at this moment placed, and still more so to those of a son, if I did not, to the utmost of my power, endeavour to mitigate the sufferings of so kind and excellent a mother. I know not in what manner I can at this moment best endeavour to contribute towards this much desired end, than to assure you, at once, of my earnest wish that you should remain at the Abbey so long as you may desire to do so, considering all that is within and without it at your entire service; and further, should you find, at the year's end, the provision my lamented father has made for you not equal to the expenses *of keeping it up*, the deficiency shall be made good by me. Our hearts, I am sure, are at present too full to discuss such subjects in person, which is the reason of my thus addressing you by letter; but let me entreat you, for the sake of my sisters, myself, and your friends, to bear up with all your might against the blow which has thus stricken you unawares and deprived you of (I fear) all that has hitherto given a relish to the pursuits and pleasures of the greater part of your life. But be comforted. My reading has informed me that there are three ways of bearing up against the ills and misfortunes of life—indifference, philosophy, and religion. The first forms no feature in your character; the second is a manly virtue, but, in the first transports of affliction, of too stern an aspect to gain admittance to a woman's breast; it is in the third and last that *you* will find the healing balm, and next to that in the affection and gratitude of your daughters, the esteem of your friends, and in the full assurance of the strict performance, not only of what is now offered to you, but of every act of love and duty on the part of

'Your truly affectionate son,
'Francis Raby.

'Amstead, March 10, 18—.'

It is said by a writer whose celebrity, perhaps, does no great honour to the feelings of human nature, that, let a man die amidst ever so many lamentations, if he could rise again from his grave, after the lapse of a short period, his reappearance upon earth would not be found to be productive of unmingled satisfaction among his relations and friends who had wept over his closing grave. But we are happy to say our hero was not one of *this* class. With an income already equal to all his wants, and all his wishes; with health and spirits, which gave the highest zest to the enjoyment of them, what more could he desire? In fact, he may be said to *have had but one wish not within his means to gratify*; but, had anybody imagined that the gratification of that wish, and the life of his excellent father, bore the most distant reproach to an equality in his well-balanced mind, he would have found himself egregiously mistaken. However, the one thing having been snatched away from him was no reason why he should not avail himself of the other; so, having become tired of his parliamentary duties, for which he did not consider himself qualified, he resigned his seat at the end of the second session; but having, as he thought, qualified himself by experience in the field for the principal office of a sportsman, he unhesitatingly accepted of one of the best of the midland countries, which became vacant, by the resignation of a noble lord, in the second year after his father's decease.

The fine income he was now in the possession of rendered pecuniary assistance unnecessary, and there was nothing wanting to insure success to the new undertaking but—what must always operate against that of all undertakings—the benefit of experience. Frank Raby was a sportsman, and in the truest acceptation of that term. He loved hunting to his very soul; he had studied it in its theory as well as in the practice of it; he understood it well in all that related to the field; but he had never been a master of hounds, *still less* their huntsman. Like a sensible man, then, he was anxious for instruction from the best source, and consequently wrote the following letter to the person whom he considered most able to furnish him with it:

'Melton Mowbray, 18—.

'My dear Sir,—

'I have the following inducements to impose a task upon you. First—the circumstance of your pack having been the one with which I made my start in the fox-hunting world; secondly—your science and experience in *all* that relates to fox-hunting; thirdly—your good-nature and kind-heartedness;

lastly, your zeal for the welfare and credit of all that relates to the noble science. A country, which you once hunted, is now offered to me, and I feel disposed to take it; *nor is this all;* I have flattered myself into the belief that I can hunt a pack of foxhounds, and intend trying my hand at it. What think you? Pray give me a candid answer, and, if favourable to my views, I shall trespass on your kindness for a little advice and instruction. By following your precepts in part, it is possible I may succeed; but, if to the full extent, there would be little doubt of it. Homer, you know (for you look into books as well as into kennels), makes Achilles a clever fellow. "No wonder," says Eustathius, "he had Chiron for his tutor, and a goddess for his mother." For myself, I cannot claim such high origin, but I have reason to hope that, *te duce,* I may, sooner or later, fulfil the *highest* object of my ambition—that of keeping and *hunting* a pack of foxhounds with credit to myself, and satisfaction to my field.

'Believe me, dear Sir, faithfully yours,
'FRANCIS RABY.'

The answer to this letter, received by return of post, ran thus:

'DEAR RABY,—

'I am always glad to hear of young men of fortune wishing to keep foxhounds, and especially when they have been well educated for the task, which I consider you to have been, by not merely serving an apprenticeship at Melton, but by having gone about the country seeing all the best establishments, and, of course, the best huntsmen. From reports that have reached me of your performance in the field—I do not mean *merely* riding to break your neck—I am proud to acknowledge the compliment you pay me, of considering me as your tutor, and it will give me much pleasure to offer you the result of my experience as far as the management of hounds both in the field and in the kennel; but, mind me, *only as a master of hounds and a sportsman.* I never hunted hounds in my life; it was not the fashion, in early days, for gentlemen to fill the office of huntsman, which was left to servile hands, and I do not think that, all things considered, the noble science—as you call fox-hunting—has gained much by the change. Gentlemen have so many other pursuits in view, that I give the preference to the servant, who, we know, has none other and is, on that account, if a man of talent, more likely to succeed. Besides, the situation of a huntsman is very trying to the temper, and your "gentleman" too often flies out, where the servant remains passive. However, as I know you to be a *devilish* good-tempered fellow, and, I have reason to believe, a thorough sportsman, there is no harm in your trying the experiment of hunting your own hounds; forasmuch as, if it do not succeed, you can but fall back on a substitute. All I will say now, then, is that I will brush up my memory on some points, and give you the result of my reminiscences and reflections at the earliest period within my power. In the meantime, believe me, yours truly,

'JOHN WARDE.

'To Francis Raby, Esq., etc. etc.'

In about a fortnight after the receipt of this friendly letter, our hero was favoured with the following observations from his kind friend and preceptor:

'I must start with your start. Do you purchase, or get together a pack of your own? I should recommend the former at a liberal price. It will save you much trouble, and be the cheapest plan in the end. If you collect a pack—like Harlequin's snuff, a pinch out of every man's box—have nothing to do but with kennels of the highest character, for the better the hounds are, the less bad, of course, will be the drafts, and *vice versâ*. For example, who would accept of a hound drafted from C——'s pack? At all events, if you determine on forming a pack by drafts from different kennels, don't fail purchasing twice as many as you may require, for depend on it, one half of them will be useless. Ask yourself the question—"Who would draft *good* hounds?" You are then purchasing faults, which you may never again get rid of. And do not trust to your eye; I have had hundreds of beautiful hounds, in my time, not worth one day's meal. Indeed, it sometimes strikes me that, as hounds improve in beauty, which they certainly do, they lose other more necessary qualities. This is certainly the case, unless they are bred from the very best blood. I conclude this part of my subject, then, by assuring you that, if you attempt to form a pack of foxhounds yourself, you must not, clever fellow as you are, expect *perfection* under ten years, and that makes a hole even in a young man's life. I can only say it cost me that time to form what I considered a steady and stout pack. Some sorts prove vicious, however highly bred; some unsound, some delicate; and, forasmuch as it requires three years to find out the results of any cross, how favourable soever may be the expectation from it, the breeder of hounds is too often, if not working in the dark, involved in uncertainties and perplexities to no small amount. As is the case with breeding horses, faults of generations back on one side or the other, will appear: and with hounds, even should the cross suit the first time, there is perplexity again; the produce must be three years old before their real goodness can be verified; and their sire must be at least five or six, as no man would breed from a hound much under three years' standing in his work. Should the cross nick, however, spare no pains to continue it, if circumstances will enable you to do so—that is to say, if the dog and the bitch are within 500 miles of each other.

'Now the chief questions for your consideration are—what constitutes a good, and what a faulty hound in his work, and, afterwards, his shape and make. The properties of a good hound are soon told. He does his best to find a fox; throws his tongue when he is *sure* he has found him, and not before; gets away *quickly* with the scent so long as it is forward; *stops* and *turns quickly* when it is not forward; *drives* it to the end *without* dwelling on it, or *tiring*; is *true to the line* without being too eager to get to the head and guide the scent; *sticks to his fox* when he is sinking in a cover, let the cover be ever so strong, which proves his perseverance and stoutness; quite steady from riot in the field; not jealous in his work; good-tempered in the kennel, of a vigorous constitution, and sound from head to foot.

'A friend of mine, speaking of the merits of hounds, has this curious though not unreasonable notion—"It may appear paradoxical," he says, "but it is nevertheless true, that the (query, *one*) proof of a hound's goodness is, that he is never remarkable during a run; and there are many good sportsmen who would prefer a hound of this nature to one which is oftener seen at head than any of the rest. Of course a hound that is not remarkable is never last, or where he should not be, but holds the line, and is what is called by some, a good line-hunter, which is the criterion of all goodness; *that* is, if he *drives* a scent, too, without dwelling on it." We may certainly call a hound of this description both good and highly useful in hunting a fox to his death, but we cannot call him brilliant. As Beckford says, "It is the dash of the foxhound that distinguishes him, as it does the hero in the battle." Besides, this same friend thus defines the line-hunter:—"A hound which will not go a yard beyond the scent, and keeps the pack right." Now if a hound, with a superior nose and steadiness, were to be conspicuous at the head, it strikes me that he would be more likely to be efficient in driving and scent, and guiding the pack right.

'Of the faults of hounds, if not the worst, the most provoking of any is slackness. It reminds you of one man taking a horse to water, whilst twenty cannot make him drink. I had rather have to do with a wild hound than a slack one. The two most acknowledged faults are running mute and skirting. The first culprit sneaks away with your fox, and foils the ground for the rest of the pack should they chance to get on the line; and the second—although a proof of intellect, or rather, running—is often the cause of much mischief, and always spoils the business-like appearance of things, however good as to extent or finish your run may be. There are, also, what are called left-handed hounds—not exactly skirters, but apt to run wide of the pack, perhaps waiting for a turn in their favour, but leaving the rest of the pack to do the *principal* work of the day. Keep none of these sorts, however *good* they may be (and often are they very good) in other respects. Then in the contrary extreme to the mute is the noisy hound, which speaks (as *men* sometimes speak) without knowing why, that is to say, without the *scent* of a *fox*, and often without any *scent* at all. He is a fit candidate for the halter, as worthless. I need not, however, tell you, who have so often seen hounds going their best pace, and over a country which enables them to hold on that best pace for a longer time than most others, that there are times when three parts of a pack run mute. On occasions like these, however, no fault is to be found. It is not in the power of a man to run and shout at the same time; at least, he is soon blown if he attempts it. Merely wild young hounds often turn out well, with proper discipline and work; but incurable hare-hunters, dwellers in the scent, especially in covers after the body are away,—those of delicate constitutions, together with the failings before enumerated, ought never to be seen in your kennel; and, as these are the sort of hounds that chiefly come under the denomination of drafts, it shows the difficulty and labour, to say nothing of the expense, of forming a pack on such a parent stock; and, on the other hand, the value of a really good pack, free from such a host of culprits. Still I do not mean to condemn the purchasing of drafted hounds, as I know several packs that have been greatly benefited by a large draft from a well-established kennel—some of which might have been put away for very trifling faults; others for the purpose of reducing the establishment; and, now and then, for the sake of a good price offered by some wealthier person than the breeder. Let me advise you, if you can accomplish it, to secure the entire lot of young hounds, not put forward in some well-established kennel. They are often rejected for a slight reason, and often for no other than that the entry is large enough without them.

'As respects shape and make, I need not say much on those points to you who have been in the habit of seeing so many good packs, nevertheless you shall have my opinion, as promised. I have always been partial to rather large hounds, provided they are free from lumber and well put together, although I agree with the dogma of the great sportsmen of the day, that "the height of a hound has nothing to do with his size,"—I should rather say his *power*. I have found large hounds suit all countries, which small ones do not, and they are generally more docile than small ones. But I must have strength and muscle combined, in proportion to size, with oblique shoulders, but no flat sides: good loins, well-let-down thighs, widely-spread gaskins, well-put-on heads, straight legs, and, of course, good feet. I have no objection to a little rise in the loins, approaching to what is called the wheel-back, for hilly countries, and ploughed ones, that carry; nor do I think much the worse of a hound if he shows a LITTLE inclination to be what is called throaty. I'll warrant he has a nose, but if he cannot go the pace the nose is of no avail. I will, however, transcribe a few lines, which I wrote some time back for my amusement, on the subject of breeding hounds, and other matters important to all owners of them:

'The breeding a pack of foxhounds to a pitch bordering on perfection, is a task of no ordinary difficulty; the best proof of which is to be found in the comparatively few sportsmen who have eminently succeeded in it, and whose blood is in high esteem to this day. Not only is every good quality to be regarded and, if possible, obtained, but every fault or imperfection is to be avoided; and although the good qualities of foxhounds are very soon reckoned, their faults, in shape and performance, present a larger catalogue. Independently of good shape, which combines strength with beauty, the highest virtue in a foxhound is not merely the exquisiteness of his nose, but in his being true to the line his game has gone, and a stout runner to the end of the chase. But he must not only thus signalise himself in chase, he must also be a patient hunter with a cold scent, and also with the pack at fault. In short, to be a hard and stout runner and a good hunter, and steady on the line, which "a good hunter" implies, constitute a perfect hound, when combined with good form. Nose and stoutness, then, must be principal objects in the breeder.

'The prevailing faults of hounds, too often innate, can only be cured by education. The greatest of all are, skirting, or not being true on the line, and throwing the tongue improperly; first, without a scent; secondly, not throwing it at all, or running mute; and thirdly, on a wrong scent, which is called running riot; but the fault of skirting, the greatest of all, is generally innate, and too often incurable. Thus has the breeder of the foxhound to guard against propensities as well as faults; and it has been justly observed that, of late years, the system of hunting is so much improved—so much attention paid to the condition of hounds, and their style of working, that a master of hounds feels it as a reflection on his judgment if *one* hound in his pack is detected in a fault.

'The selection of dog and bitch to breed from is a nice point for a master of hounds or his huntsman to decide upon; but if he aim at excellence, he must keep his eye on perfection. In no animal—not even in the horse—is perfect symmetry so desirable—I may say necessary—as in the foxhound, inasmuch as without it there is no dependence on his services, however good may be his nature. I will describe him, first, in the words of a very old writer on those subjects, and afterwards in those of Mr. Beckford, when it will appear that there is a strong resemblance in the portraits drawn by each. "His head," says the former, "ought to be of middle proportion, rather long than round; his nostrils wide; his ears large; his back broad; the fillets great; the haunches large; the thighs well trussed; the ham straight; the tail big near the reins, and slender towards the end; the leg big; the sole of the foot dry, and formed like a fox's, with the claws great." The latter says—"There are necessary points in the shape of a hound which ought always to be attended to; for if he have not perfect symmetry, he will neither run fast nor bear much work; he has much to undergo, and should have strength proportioned to it. Let his legs be as straight as arrows; his feet round, and not too large; his shoulders back; his breast rather *wide* than *narrow*; his chest deep; his back broad; his head small; his neck thin; his tail thick and brushy, and if he carry it well, so much the better." Now the hound that would answer to either of these descriptions would disgrace no man's kennel, and one resembling the latter would be an ornament to it; but, with regard to the former, it must be borne in mind that it is from the pen of a sportsman who wrote a century and a half ago, when, there is reason to believe, no animal in the form of the present day was to be found in this or in any other country. I am, however, disposed to think that there is much of the real character of the foxhound in the description given by the older writer, such as the long, rather than round, head; the wide nostrils (Pliny says they should be fat, solid, and blunt), and the dry, fox-like foot. The "boned back" appears to spoil all, unless it means that gentle rise in the loins, which many good judges approve of for hilly, and especially ploughed countries, which "carry," as the term is, after a slight frost, thereby adding much to the natural weight of the hound. Beckford gives us the modern foxhound, and, in my opinion, perfect, with the exception of the mention of one or two material points. "His chest should be deep," he says, "and his back broad"; but he has omitted a point much thought of by modern sportsmen, namely, *the back ribs*, which should also be deep, as in a strong-bodied horse, of which we say, when so formed, that he has a good "spur place," a point highly esteemed in him. Nor is either of these writers sufficiently descriptive of the hinder legs of the hound: for, although the large haunch and well-trussed thigh of the former denote power and muscle, there is a length of thigh discernible in hounds of first-rate form, which, like the well-let-down hock of the horse, gives them superiority of speed, and is also a great security against laming themselves in leaping fences, which they are more apt to do when they become blown, or tired, and, consequently, weak. The fore-legs, "straight as arrows," is an admirable illustration of perfection in those parts, by Beckford; for, as in a bow or bandy-legged[1] man, nothing is so disfiguring to a hound as his having his elbows out, and it is also a great check to speed. In some countries, the round cat-like foot is indispensable, and it is agreeable to the eye in all; but I would not reject a well-shapen puppy in all other respects, for merely somewhat of an open foot, provided his ankles or fetlocks were good, a point I consider of the greatest importance to all quadruped animals. The shoulders of the foxhound should, especially, resemble those of a horse—oblique, but, at the same time, strong; for a narrow-chested hound is almost certain to be shaken by hard work, and, consequently, unlikely to endure beyond his third season.

'As Beckford recommends a small head, it may be presumed the fashion on this point began to be changed in his time, and has been since, I think, carried to rather too great an excess, especially in one or two kennels of high repute, in which small heads are become one of the leading characteristics. For my part, I like some length of head in the foxhound, not being able to divest myself of the idea of a cross with the old-fashioned pointer when I see him with a short head and a snubbed nose. Beckford also says the neck should be thin. I should say, *moderately thin*. I dislike a thin neck in any animal but a milch cow and the stag; at the same time, I dislike a short, thick neck in a hound. His neck should be moderately long and moderately thick, with the muscles clearly developed; it should rise gracefully out of his shoulders, with a slight curve, or crest, and, to completely satisfy the eye, should be quite free from the exuberances of flesh and rough hair on the lower side of it, called, by kennel men, "chitterlings," or "ruffles," the hound having them being termed throaty. There are, however, numerous exceptions to this rule, as some of the best hounds England ever saw have been throaty; and although I am aware that one individual instance will prove neither the rule nor its exception, I can mention Mr. Meynell's famous stallion hound, Guzman, who, although throaty, was as good a foxhound as ever man hallooed to, and the sire of many good ones. I agree with Beckford that the stern of a foxhound should be thick and moderately brushy; and, if well carried, it is a great ornament to him; but there is one part of it which his owner likes to see nearly deprived of its covering, and that is its tip, which, when in that state, is an infallible proof of his being a good and not a slack drawer of covers, nor shy of facing the strongest of them in chase.

'But to return to breeding the foxhound. In the breeding of some animals, beauty of shape is often dependent on the caprice of fashion, or the peculiar taste of the breeder; but in the breeding of hounds no such latitude can be given: for here beauty, or true symmetry of shape, is alone in reference to *utility, and adaptation of parts to the purposes to which they are to be applied.* Yet the breeder of foxhounds has one point further to go; he must, as I have already said, guard against *propensities* which run in the blood of those animals, perhaps stronger than their good qualities do, and will, sooner or later, break out in their work, if they really exist. In the election, then, of a dog for a bitch, or a bitch for a dog, these matters must be most attentively considered: and no man should breed from hounds of *either* sex that come under any or either of the following denominations, viz., not of a tolerably docile sort, but very difficult to be made to enter to their game; or guilty of any of the faults I have already enumerated; and, above all things, if found evidently deficient in nose. Good constitution should likewise be looked to carefully; but I would not reject a stallion hound, or a brood bitch, merely for being slack drawers, or for not being always at the head in chase, provided they were themselves well bred, of good form, and true to the line in cover and out.

'As to the proper combination of form, that must be self-evident to the breeder of hounds. If a bitch is a little high on her legs, or light, she should be put to a short-legged, strong dog, and, of course, *vice versâ*; if rather light in her tongue, that defect may also be remedied by an opposite property in a dog. Defects in legs and feet can only be remedied by such means: and fortunate it is for the owner of an otherwise perfect and excellent bitch that such remedies are at hand. Length and shortness of frame, when in excess, as well as coarse points, are to be obviated and altered in the same way, making allowance for the fact, that the laws of nature are not invariable. Constitution can likewise be remedied by having recourse to that which is good (and none so easily detected as the dog's), and colour changed, if wished for. It is, in fact, the judicious cross, as Beckford says, that makes the pack complete: and it was the remark of that eminent sportsman of his day, that he saw no reason why the breeding of hounds may not improve till improvement can go no further. The question may be asked, is not his prediction verified?

'But the act of crossing hounds, as, indeed, all other animals, although never thoroughly divested of chance, is one of more difficulty than most people would imagine, and one which, by its results, would often baffle, if not puzzle, the profoundest of our modern physiologists. I cannot go at length into this intricate subject, but I have reason to know that great mistakes have been made by masters of foxhounds in breeding too much in-and-in from near affinities, instead of having recourse to an alien cross. This was peculiarly apparent in two packs of long standing which I could name, which were bred too much in-and-in—one from a favourite bitch and her produce, and the other from a dog hound and his produce. It is asserted, and with truth, that a pack of foxhounds, to be perfect, should have the appearance and character of being of one family: but this expression is not to be taken in its literal construction. It is in the conformity of their character and appearance that they should bear a close resemblance to each other, and not in their close consanguinity. In my own kennel, indeed, I have been too partial to my own blood; and I reluctantly admit that, although I believe I may say my hounds are unrivalled in fine form, I may trace a certain degree of slackness to that cause. On the other hand, the rare but valuable combination of dash and nose which has made the pack of a certain Duke a match for the cold and somewhat ungenial hills of Oxfordshire, are to be attributed to his huntsman—one of the best breeders of hounds of his day—going from home for his blood, and sending his bitches to the celebrated stallion hounds of the best kennels within his reach. This, however, it must be remembered, is not within the command of every man's purse, the expenses attendant on sending bitches to a distance, under any circumstances, being heavy; as they must not only be placed under the care of a trusty servant, but there are other occult charges which none but masters of hounds are aware of. It is, however, a notorious fact, that the produce of some stallion hounds, if they have but a fair chance by the bitch, seldom fail in turning out well, and transmitting their good qualities to many succeeding generations.

'As to the size of hounds, various arguments are made use of by the advocates of large and small ones. Those of the former sort, that they get better across a deep and strongly-fenced country than the smaller ones do; whilst the admirers of the latter insist upon their being better climbers of hills, more active in cover, and quicker out of it, when their fox is gone; and are oftener found to be more perfect in form and shape. As to strict uniformity in size, how pleasing soever it may be to the eye, it is by no means essential to the well-doing of hounds in the field, and has been disregarded by some of our first sportsmen—the great Meynell for one, who never drafted a really good hound for being over or under the general standard of his kennel. The great object of that eminent sportsman—and such has been mine—was to breed them with muscular power and bone, combined with as much symmetry as could be obtained; and to be equal in speed and good qualities, rather than equal in height. For myself, I am anxious to see my dog hounds rise to twenty-five inches, or more, and bitches from twenty-three to twenty-four; but such a standard is very difficult to maintain; and, after all, perhaps, it may be said of hounds, as has been said of horses, that their height has little to do with their size, as far, at least, as their powers of action are concerned; and I believe that, in all animals that labour, a medium height is best.

'The amount of hounds to be bred annually will depend on the average strength of your kennel, and the number of days' hunting in the week, which the country they are intended for requires. From sixty to eighty couples of working hounds are as many as any man ought to keep, being a complement for at least four days in the week. This will require the breeding of as many couples of puppies every year to allow for the usual diminution of the entry, by malformation, under size, and that bane to the kennel, the distemper, which often takes off a third of them. As the period of gestation in bitches is somewhat over two calendar months, they should, if they can be spared, be put to dog in January, as then they will litter in the spring, when the weather is comparatively warm, and the puppies will come early into kennel, generally be of good size and powerful, and be entered without loss of time.

'It is said that a dog, in a state of nature, is subject to few diseases, and for those he finds his cure by an instinctive faculty: in a domesticated state he is subject to many, and some of an awful nature, which may be classed amongst the *opprobria medicorum*, no certain remedy being discovered for them. Amongst these is one called "distemper," not known to our forefathers, but, at present, become a sort of periodical disorder in kennels of hounds, to the destruction of thousands of young ones annually. The first symptoms of this disease are, generally, a dry husky cough, want of appetite, and consequent loss of flesh; extreme dulness, and a running from the eyes and nose. As the disease advances, it is attended with distressing twitchings of the head and, occasionally, of the whole frame, while the animal becomes very weak in the loins and hinder extremities, and is greatly emaciated; convulsive fits, too, often close the scene. For the cure of this disorder I venture not to prescribe; there is no specific, but the severity of the disease may be diminished by lowering the system of young hounds by gentle doses of salts when they first come into kennel, and, to a great extent, successfully guarded against by very great attention to their diet, cleanliness, and exercise.

'With respect to the age of hounds, few are found in a kennel after their eighth year, and still fewer after their ninth; and not many hard-working hounds can "run up," or keep pace with the rest, after their sixth season. Hounds are in their prime in the third and fourth year, but there are instances, rare ones, of their hunting in their eleventh and twelfth. I should place the average at four seasons. Old hounds are useful in the field, but when they cannot run up they should be drafted. The perfection of a pack consists in the great body of it being composed of hounds quite in their prime.

'I have always been partial to a good cry in hounds, and listen to it with feelings not confined to fox-hunting. Sounds, by association, become the signs of ideas, and the great variety in the voice of nature must have been designed to meet the peculiar tastes and purposes of the countless multitudes that dwell on the face of the earth. That the cry of hounds is a voluntary noise, proceeding from a powerful organic impulse, is quite apparent, as is also the purpose for which the impulse is given, namely, to announce their having discovered the scent of an animal, either obnoxious to their notice, or desirable as food; and also by calling their straggling companions together and uniting their forces, the better to enable them to secure their prey. On the other hand, here is mercy shown to the prey they are in pursuit of. The tongue of the hound gives notice of his approach; and he does not pounce upon his victim as the silent greyhound does, which Gratius, in his poem on coursing, alludes to in the following line:

> "Sic canis illa suos taciturna supervenit hostes."

'But the cry of hounds, melodious and heart-stirring as it even now is, has lost much of its poetical interest from the change man has made in the natural organisation of the animal from which it proceeds; and we shall never again hear of a master of a pack, after the manner of Addison's knight, returning a hound that had been given to him as an "excellent bass," whereas the note he wanted was a "counter tenor." Beckford, however, was something of the worthy knight's opinion on this point, for he says, "If we attended more than we do to the variety of the notes frequently to be met with in the tongues of hounds, it might add greatly to the harmony of the pack." This is well in theory. The natural organisation of the dog is musical; he is, in fact, a victim to musical sensibility, and we may reasonably suppose that the notes of his companions in the chase may be as pleasing to himself as to his huntsman; but I do not think a huntsman of this day would draft a highly-bred and beautiful young bitch, as good too as she looks to be, merely because her light fox-hunting tongue might be somewhat drowned, and now and then lost, in the general chorus of the pack. He would rather say, "Let every tongue be to a fox, and I leave the rest to chance." But on a good day for hearing it (there is a wide difference in this respect), what natural sound is more delightful and animating than that of hounds in full cry, in the deep recesses of an echo-giving wood? Neither would those writers who have availed themselves of the beauty and sublimity which allusion to sounds in nature stamp on their various compositions, have at all descended from their eminence, if they had, like Shakspeare, delighted as much in bringing the soul in contact with such a sound as this as with the rolling of thunder or the howlings of the storm.

'The situation of huntsman to a pack of foxhounds is one of great responsibility, and, if the breeding as well as hunting of them be left to him, a very arduous undertaking. Nor does it end here. There is a great call for judgment in feeding hounds to answer every purpose, such as long draws, severe days, and, at the same time, to go the pace without showing distress, and to come home at night with their sterns up and looking fresh. Here variety of constitution increases the difficulty; for, to satisfy the eye, hounds should look level in their condition, as well as even in point of size. One hound will not bear to have his belly more than half filled; another will not fill his when he may; and still each must be made equal in strength and wind to the other, to stand hard work, and go the pace without showing distress. A huntsman must have a very watchful eye over their condition, which will be affected by work and weather; and he must be pathologist enough to foresee and provide against the alterations which such circumstances produce. He had need also to be a physiologist to exercise a sound judgment in breeding his hounds after a certain form and fashion, which are absolutely essential to their doing well in their work, and at the same time pleasing the eye. Then look at him in the field with a hundred eyes upon him, and a hundred tongues to canvass all his acts! Here he should be a philosopher, and the qualities given to him, by Beckford, at once make him such.[1]

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[1] '"A good huntsman," says Beckford, "should be young, strong, and active, bold and enterprising; fond of the diversion, and indefatigable in the pursuit of it; he should be sensible and good-tempered; he ought also to be sober; he should be exact, civil, and cleanly; he should be a good horseman, and a good groom; his voice should be strong and clear; and he should have an eye so quick as to perceive which of his hounds carry the scent when all are running; and should have so excellent an ear, as always to distinguish the foremost hounds when he does not see them. He should be quiet, patient, and without conceit.

'Without entering into the wide range of hunting, the following maxims may be observed with advantage by a huntsman:—

'In drawing for your fox don't be persuaded *always* to draw up wind. In the first place you are in danger of chopping your fox; secondly, he is almost sure then to go down wind at starting; and thirdly, you may drive him into the worst part of your country, or from his point. (I am, of course, supposing your pack to be quite steady, otherwise drawing up wind is more desirable, as, should any riot be going on down wind, the voice of the huntsman will better reach the offenders.) When found, get after him as quickly as possible, if you have a body of hounds with you, if not, you will have a better chance of a run if you wait a little until the body come up. This is easily done, either by horn or halloo, if hounds are

He should let his hounds alone when they can hunt, and he should have genius to assist them when they cannot." Perhaps more than this cannot be expected from humanity. Can we give a man higher qualifications than a clear head, nice observation, undaunted courage, an accurate ear, and a lynx's eye, together with a quick perception, endowed with ready impulses for acting so necessary to each? That he should be fond of his profession and indefatigable in the pursuit of it; sober and exact, sensible and good-tempered. It is not necessary that either a huntsman or a soldier should be a man of letters; some of the former have been scarcely able to read, and there have been but few Cæsars who could both fight and write; but a good and sound understanding is put to the test both by the one and the other; and each requires, in addition to such an undertaking, a manly exertion of talent. With respect to gentlemen-huntsmen, there cannot be a doubt that no man enjoys hunting to perfection equally with him who hunts his own hounds; nor can there be any reason assigned why an educated gentleman should not excel in any ardent and highly scientific pursuit, which hunting is allowed to be, an uneducated servant. Nevertheless it does admit of a doubt whether, throughout the fox-hunting world in general, gentlemen-huntsmen have been so popular as might have been expected; and in a few countries that have been hunted by subscription an exception has been taken against the master of the pack being the huntsman. That it is a laborious office when efficiently performed, both in the kennel and the field, is well known to those who have filled it, but, *labor ipse voluptas*, a painstaking zeal is often displayed by the master, which has been wanting in the servant; and it was the remark of a certain nobleman that, after the first fox, his huntsman was more disposed to find his dinner than a second. In a well-known "diary" lately published, a perfect huntsman is thus described: "He should possess the following qualifications: health, memory, decision, temper, and patience, voice and sight, courage and spirits, perseverance and activity," which requisites a still later writer on the "noble science" seems to think are oftener found in the gentleman than the servant. The first-named writer pithily observes, that, with the attributes he awards to him, a huntsman will soon make a bad pack a good one. If quick, he will make a slow pack quick; if slow, he will make a quick pack slow.'

under good command, and the convenient opportunity is seized upon, and a whipper-in is in his right place. Keep near your hounds in chase, with your eye on the body of the pack, as well as on such as may be leading; the body are more certain to be right. Next to knowing where a fox is gone, is knowing where he is not gone; therefore in your casts always make good the head. This you will do for your satisfaction; but hounds are seldom at fault for the scent ahead, when the chase has been at all warm, that is, on a fair scenting day; for if the fox be gone forward wherefore the fault? Good hounds will seldom or never leave a scent ahead unless the ground be stained by sheep or cattle, or when the chase leads over dry ploughed land, hard and dry roads, and so forth. It is high odds that your fox has turned to the right or to the left; but, although his point may be back, he cannot well run his foil from the number of horsemen that are generally in the rear of hounds. Recollect your first check is generally the most fatal to sport, and for these reasons: your hounds are fresh, and perhaps a little too eager; they may have overrun the scent for some distance, owing to having been pressed upon by the horses, which are also at this time fresh; nor will they always get their heads down so soon as they should do, from the same exciting causes. Again, your check now generally arises from a short turn, the fox having been previously forced from a point which he now resolves to make; and he will make it at all hazard at certain times. When your hounds first throw up, leave them alone if they can hunt; but, disregarding what some of the "old ones" say on this subject, as inapplicable to these faster times, don't be long before you take hold of them, and assist them, if they cannot. I would not go from scent to view; yet hounds that will not bear lifting are not worth having, for lifted they must be over stain of sheep or cattle; for, as Beckford observes, "it is the judicious encouraging of hounds to hunt, when they cannot run, and the preventing their losing time by hunting too much, that distinguish a good huntsman from a bad one." But do all this quietly as well as quickly. Turn your horse's head towards the line you think your fox is gone; and the first moment you see all their heads up, that is, if they do not hit him off, put your horn to your mouth for one blast or two, and trot away to still more likely points. If your pack will divide when casting, so much the better; but good hounds will be making their own cast to a certain extent, whilst you are making yours, by not keeping at your horse's heels, but spreading as they go.

'When you have hit upon his point, if a single hound goes off with a good scent, get the body to him as quickly as you can; but not so if the scent be warm. In the latter case, your hounds will be in expectation of a fresh fox, and will be in a hurry; the hound that is forward will be lifted, and, in all probability, you will have to seek for the scent again. Go gently, and your hounds, if steady, will settle to it. Likewise, if, when at check, you are hallooed to a spot where a fox has been viewed, *stand still*, and say nothing at the moment the first two or three hounds throw their tongues. If you hurry the body on immediately, the scent will often be lost should the fox have been a few minutes gone. Again, when a fox has been viewed, and you go directly to halloo, do not take your hounds to the extreme distant point at which he was viewed, but about a hundred yards behind it, and for this reason: if you take them to the extreme point, and they do not hit off the scent at once, you have then to make your cast at a venture; whereas, if you lay them on at that distance behind it, you have somewhat of a guide to that extent, as to the line to which you should draw them.

'The following hints relate to hounds, either at fault, or in difficulties. In trying back, hounds have this advantage. It is evident the fox has come the line up to the point where the check occurred; and he must be gone either to the right or the left of it, or back. I make this remark because so much has been said about the straight running of foxes, which is far from true; and the necessity of persevering in the cast ahead with the fox, and back on the foil with the hare. The more hounds spread within reason in this backward cast, the better will be the chance of making the cast a short one. Again, if at check on a road or footpath (the latter not often run over by foxes), when you observe some of your best hounds failing to make it good on one side of either, it is reasonable to suppose the fox is gone on the other. If your hounds check in a cover in the middle of a run, and the fox is viewed away from it, try and get your hounds together as much as you can in the short time that can be allowed for it, before you cap them to the scent. It generally insures a good finish from two obvious causes. First, your hounds get fresh wind: and, secondly, they will have a better chance to carry a good head, which generally insures blood, and blood well earned; for the fox is more likely to stand longer and go straighter for not having been viewed by hounds when he broke. But the most difficult point for a huntsman to decide upon promptly is, when his pack divides, which lot is on the hunted fox. If it happen in cover, his ear is his surest guide, as the cry is louder and stronger on a fresh-found fox than on one which has been for some time on foot. If, when out of cover, your pack should divide on two separate scents, you should get as near as you can to what you imagine to be the chase, giving view-halloos every yard you go, also sending a whipper-in to stop the other hounds. Your choice will doubtless be directed by several circumstances. You will first look for your truest and best line-hunting hounds, and next, to the points your first fox would be likely to make for; and if your choice fall upon the lot that are going up the wind, the other will be more likely to hear them running, and, should they come to a check, to join cry again, perhaps before a whipper-in can get to stop them.

'Do not be dispirited at a succession of bad sport, for it is not within your control, good hounds and good sport not being, as has been before observed, naturally co-existing circumstances. Be as zealous as you please in the field, but temper your zeal with judgment, and do not weary your hounds by long draws on days which bid defiance to sport. It was once justly observed, that those who seek for pleasure from the chase must ask permission of Heaven, and the case still remains the same. Hounds may be improved in their form and physical powers, but they cannot hunt without scent, and without it they resemble a man trying to run fast in the dark; neither can they make head against such fearful obstructions; and, on stormy days, with a very high wind, you had better go home after the first failure. It is not generally known what mischief even one such unpropitious day does to some hounds. Do not set too high a value on blood, unless it has been well earned by your hounds; it is the result of want of reflection alone, that has set any value whatever upon it, when otherwise obtained. Kill a good fox whenever you can; it will satisfy your hounds, yourself, your field, and the farmers. Mob a bad one in a corner if you like; neither he nor his produce will show you any sport; but never dig out a good one, unless your hounds have almost viewed him into the spout or drain, which he has got into, and you can bolt him before the excitement of your hounds subsides. Never break ground in a country belonging to another pack of hounds, nor dig for a fox in a main earth in your own. Many a vixen fox, heavy with young, has been killed by this means, in the spring, instead of the one that was hunted and marked into it by the pack; and be assured that sportsmen do not estimate the goodness of a pack of foxhounds by the noses nailed against their kennel-door. Lastly, keep your field back from pressing on your hounds in chase, and still more so when in difficulties, as much as in you lies; but do not suffer your zeal to carry you too far on this point. Remember the apostolic precept—*Be courteous.* Neither approach too near the hounds yourself, when at fault, as the steam from even one horse is perplexing to them.

'Beckford says that, "although it is not necessary that a huntsman should be a man of letters, it is necessary that he should be a man of understanding." This also applies to a whipper-in; and I am bound to say, I never saw a steady pack of hounds without at least *one* good and efficient man at this post; but I have seen many of those red-coated youths, who might have been better employed at the plough's tail—who, after the manner of Cicero's lawyer, belonged to the profession, but not to the science. Beckford assigns to *him* the most important duties, and leaves me but little to add. I merely recommend him, when his huntsman is casting his hounds, to turn them to him, when necessary, as gently as he can, compatible with dispatch, and with little noise; by which means they will *draw* towards him, trying for the scent as they go; whereas loud and repeated rates and cracks of the whip make hounds fly to their huntsman at this time with their heads up. When they are drawing properly towards him, not another word need be said: a whipper-in merely riding outside of them will, or, at least, ought to be sufficient.

'It is scarcely necessary to observe that a whipper-in to foxhounds, to be perfect, should be an accomplished horseman, as nothing requires a much nicer and firmer hand than the act of following and overtaking a hound over open ground, to flog him. A good whipper-in, however, will always hit a hound first, and rate him afterwards, and be able to hit him hard when occasion requires it. I deprecate the very idea of wanton cruelty towards any animal, but a riotous foxhound must not be trifled with, if he is to be cured, without the halter, of his evil ways: let the lash, then, fall heavily when necessary, but at no other times. Above all, a whipper-in must have an eye to skirters; skirting is the least pardonable fault hounds can possess, because they are then deviating from their nature, and have not the force of impulse to plead, which those which run riot after hares or deer have. Great caution, however, is necessary in the use of the whip to a young hound when on a scent. *He may be right*, in which case he may never forget the check he receives, and be slack in his work for the rest of his life. As study precedes practice, and fits us for it, let me call your attention to the following essential points, and remember that we should not be content with mediocrity when perfection can be obtained:

'You are about to take upon yourself a laborious and difficult task, that of huntsman to your own pack, in a country frequented by many of the first sportsmen of the day. I wish you may acquit yourself well; but recollect what Smollett says of historians—"that *the world* has been able to produce but *six* good ones!" and it may be said of a huntsman that, in all his operations, he has not only to exercise his mental faculties at every step he goes, when unravelling the intricacies of the chase, but actually to tread a path nearly unknown to human reason. Your only chance to shine is, by availing yourself of your experience of what you have found to be good in others; to attend to the suggestions of superior judgment on points on which you are doubtful; and to abandon all popular but erroneous notions of the old school. By doing this, I doubt not but the disciple will soon get beyond his master.

'I now call your attention to a few essential points. Your kennel is a sound one; you need be under no apprehension respecting kennel lameness, about which so much has been said and written, and all to little purpose. The whole secret is this—if the subsoil of the ground on which your kennel is built is damp, your hounds will be liable to rheumatism, and be lame: and the more porous the soil is, the more likely will it be for the damp to ascend, for which reason, sandy soils, which appear to be the driest, because they dry soonest after rain, are the worst for the sites of kennels. Some attribute the malady to several other causes, such as washing, dressing, etc. I do not believe washing hounds has anything to do with it; although it is possible the injudicious use of sulphur in dressing or physicking may. Madness I hope *you* will never experience. One thing, however, I think you may assure yourself of, namely, that your hounds will never go mad *spontaneously*—that is to say, *unless* from the bite of a rabid dog. At least such is my opinion; and it is also the opinion of several veterinary surgeons, who are now turning their attention to the diseases of dogs, as well as those of horses. In case, then, of any hound in your pack being bitten by a dog of whose state of health you are ignorant, have him separated from the pack instantly on seeing anything unusual in his appearance. Of all other diseases, distemper excepted, cleanliness will be the best preventive. As Somerville says—

> "Much does health on cleanliness depend."

'As for distemper, you must take your chance for that. There appears to be no specific as yet found out; but acting on the prophylactic system has answered with me. I give repeated mild doses of salts to my young hounds when they first come up, and then, should they take the distemper, the disease is less virulent, and oftener yields to those medicines which are found to be partly efficacious. Physicking and bleeding and dressing, after the season is concluded—all of which are essential to the well doing of your pack—will be attended to by your kennel huntsman; all you have to do is, to see that they are properly performed. During the moving of the coat is considered the best time to dress.

'Over accident you have no control: rest is the best doctor for strains of shoulder, stifle, etc.; and the sharpest astringents are to be applied to wounds in the feet, to which hounds are so liable in their work. The most efficient remedy for wounds was *supposed* to lie in the dog's own tongue; but experience has proved it to be, in many cases, injurious. Spaying bitches is recommended by many; and it is said that twenty couples of spayed bitches would do the work of twenty-five or thirty couples of open ones. Be it so; still I do not recommend the practice; first, on account of the severity and danger of the operation; secondly, in that it deprives the animal of perpetuating the excellent properties she might possess. It is altogether a barbarous practice; neither should an operation of a similar nature be performed on a dog hound, unless incurably quarrelsome in the kennel.

'Hounds, like horses, must be quite fit to go, or good foxes will beat them. If you are to hunt your hounds yourself, it must be yourself that must look to this point, which must be accomplished long before the season commences. In fact, it is by your summer work that your hounds will be fitted for the winter's campaign. But here you must depend upon your kennel huntsman, inasmuch as you cannot be expected to be in the saddle at four o'clock in the morning, at which hour your pack ought to be out, during the hot months, and occasionally kept out for seven or eight hours at a time, especially towards the approach of cub-hunting. I do not suppose you will always feed your hounds yourself, neither do I think it absolutely necessary; but everything depends upon how it is done. Experience will convince you that, whilst but few hounds in your kennel can be allowed to eat their fill, there are many who must be fed to a mouthful, and others enticed to feed, to render them quite fit. It is on this account that, unless a gentleman-huntsman always feeds in the hunting season, he had better entrust it to other hands, guided by the result of his observation of certain hounds in their work. If your fixture is beyond ten or twelve miles from your kennel, let your hounds (and horses) sleep out. They will be fresher and stouter in their work the following day, and decidedly better in a very sharp burst with their first fox, as well as having more left in them for a good afternoon fox, and he generally proves a good one—that is to say, comparatively with the powers of his pursuers.

'Get your young hounds into kennel in good time; kennel food will improve their shape, and they will be free from chances of accidents, as also of acquiring loose habits. Remember that you will want a large kennel of working hounds, and do not be in too great a hurry to draft. At all events, you must put forward thirty couples, which will allow for the ravages of the distemper, should it attack them, and also admit of a second draft. By no means enter your young hounds to hare. It is a practice not founded in reason; on the contrary, it is, by opposing the natural propensities of the animal, *after having encouraged them*, an unjustifiable exercise of our dominion over him.

'You will, of course, go through the process of cub-hunting. On this subject I have only to observe—*begin as soon as you can, and follow it up stoutly*. Exclusive of the necessity of entering and blooding your hounds, by moving young foxes, you will make them safer from the fox-takers; and those which may be left in the country will fly when found by your pack further on in the season. But don't think *too highly* of blood further on in the season. That it is desirable there cannot be a question, when obtained by fair means, and well-deserved; but that it is essential to sport, I deny. Weather admitting of good scent is essential, if you please; but I can name one of the first packs in England which had the best week's sport they ever had since they were a pack, after nine days' hunting, without tasting blood. Stag-hounds rarely taste blood, and what hounds run faster, or work harder?

'It has been said that a run with foxhounds should resemble a successful battle—that it should be "sharp, short, and decisive." My idea of a truly *good* run is not exactly this. I think it should be not less than an hour, and with at least two checks. I mean to say, there should be difficulties in the course of it, the overcoming of which proclaims the credit of both hounds and huntsman. I would divide it thus:—I would have twenty-five minutes, best pace, with a right good scent. Next, a check *well recovered*, but not until the hounds and horses had recovered their wind, and, even then, I like seeing the pack brought to hunting, but at a fair pace, for about fifteen more minutes. I would now wish to see my fox well hunted up to, and finish with running into him at the end of the remaining twenty minutes, *at very best pace*. Runs exceeding an hour are liable to two objections; they are tiresome to hounds and horses, and are not what is called business-like. For my own part, I have always seen more satisfaction expressed by my field, after a smart burst of half an hour, than at the end of a run which we may call a journey.

'There are a few difficult points in hunting hounds, to which it may not be amiss to call your attention. In drawing covers, for example, you should observe the parts most likely to hold a fox: in fact, you should study your country, as well as the science of hunting it. Foxes do not generally prefer the most thick and dense part of a wood for their kennel; on the contrary, they often lie near to the outside, and facing the morning or evening sun, under the rays of which they much like to bask. The art of distinguishing a fresh from a beaten fox, as well as having a good eye to a heavy vixen, are requisites in huntsmen, and to be acquired only by experience. The being able to distinguish what is called a moving scent—that is, the scent of a disturbed fox—from a drag, is also to be acquired by the same means—that said thing, called "experience."

'I like to see a huntsman alive and stirring, as well as his hounds, when he enters a cover to draw for his fox. Homer compares hounds cheered by their huntsman, to troops encouraged by a general. There certainly is something very cheering to the field in the "cheering halloo" of a huntsman, and it is useful as well. Should a hound get wide of the pack, or hang behind in the cover; or should any of the field be at a loss, which often happens in woodlands, "the pipe" of the huntsman is an unerring guide to all. How necessary is it, then—at all events, how desirable—that, like Ajax, he should be βοὴν ἀγαθὸς, renowned for strength of voice, and, we may add, for the melodiousness of it. He should likewise blow a horn well: and if he varies the blast, to make himself more intelligible to his hounds, he will find his account in it. I wonder why this is not more practised than it is. Independently of the common *recheat*, why not have the "view-horn," as well as the "view-halloo"? Too much horn, however, is to be condemned, having a tendency to make hounds disregard it; still a huntsman would be sadly at a loss without it, not only in getting hounds away from cover and in chase, but in bringing them over to him, when drawing large covers.

'As regards the use of the voice, the following hints may be useful to you:—Never halloo unless you have a good reason for doing so. A constant and indiscriminate use of the voice is blameable in a huntsman, inasmuch as his hounds, by constantly hearing it, will pay but little attention to it. Hallooing to hounds is highly useful when done with judgment, but it must be done with caution. Never cap your hounds, *with halloos*, to a bad scent; it makes them wild and eager, and never should be done but when the scent is good. Hounds cannot be brought up too quietly to a cold scent. With respect to your field hallooing, I have no objection to a little of that under certain circumstances. No one should halloo if he is behind hounds; but if a man, who knows what hunting is, happens to be well up with the pack when they are on good terms with their fox, a cheering halloo may do no harm; the hounds will not attend to it, and it is expressive of the pleasure of the hallooer. The huntsman, however, who is endowed by nature with a clear, sonorous voice, in a well-pitched key, and knows how to use it with effect, contributes to the enthusiasm of fox-hunting, and, consequently, to the success of it.

'Earth-stopping is best done by at once stopping all main earths, having first stunk them out, as the term is, by brimstone matches, etc., so as to prevent the chance of having foxes stopped in them. It is by the knowledge of main earths to fox-stealers that foxes are taken; and if all main earths in England and elsewhere were destroyed, there would be more foxes and better runs.

'If one vixen fox can lay and bring up her litter above ground, why cannot another? And is it not proverbial that what are called stub-bred foxes are generally stoutest runners? In the summer, let your whippers-in go about and discover the mouths of drains, and have them staked. Iron gratings will be stolen, and stakes will last two years.

'Although I am of opinion that foxes do not destroy game nearly to the extent which is laid to their charge, still, as the preservation of it is now become so fashionable, you must open your purse to the keepers within your country, and a dinner to them, annually, with your huntsman in the chair, will go a great way in procuring their respect and good-will. It is stated, indeed, on good practical authority, that, by opening the racks in covers, during cub-hunting, and early in the season, a pack of foxhounds help to preserve game, by destroying the facility of its being snared in the unopened racks. A few sovereigns, thrown amongst under-keepers in the course of the season, have a very good effect in preventing blank days. However, to make assurance doubly sure, when a litter of cubs is *known* to be on dangerous ground, let them be moved, by stinking the mouth of the earth, when the vixen will carry them off. As to purchasing foxes, that expedient need not be resorted to in your country: it is a bad system altogether, the greater part of them being mangy.

'Draw your covers closely, especially those of gorse, with which your country abounds. I have seen foxes left in them, frequently, after hounds have been drawing for at least half an hour. They lie very close in such places, and, even when found, are often difficult to force out of them, by reason of the ground becoming stained, if a ring or two is taken. Be sure you do not omit drawing your outlying covers regularly at stated periods of the season, and always throw off near the place fixed. It may not matter to many of your field whether or not they may have to trot away four or five miles before you begin drawing; but farmers and others, who have very short studs—perhaps only one hunter—are much discomfited by it. A brother master of hounds fixes for three weeks in advance, which renders his hunt popular; but it is not every country that will admit of it.

'Should you have occasion to make gorse covers, observe these hints from one who has made many. The ground is all the better for being trenched to the depth of from a foot to a foot and a half; and it should be made as clean and in as good condition as if it were to be the seed-bed of turnips. The seed should also be minutely examined, as it often fails from having lost its germinating properties; and it should be drilled in the ground and hoed, after the manner of a turnip crop. By keeping it clean by the hoe, it will, if the seed be good, and the land made dry, often hold a fox in the second year, but will seldom fail in the third. A brother master of hounds recommends sowing broom with gorse, but he is wrong, it being decidedly inimical to scent. All artificially made covers should be not nearer than half a mile, at the least, to any house or village; and if on a gently sloping bank, facing the south, or south-west, foxes will like them the better.

'Bred up as you have been, it is scarcely necessary to remind you of your general conduct towards your field, composed, as it will be, of some of the first sportsmen in the world, as well as others of all descriptions. The management of a field is no easy task, and, in one respect, resembles that of a community. In reference to the latter, a celebrated Roman historian, Dion Cassius, says—"The times are bad when men are not permitted to do what they please, and worse when they are permitted to do everything they please." Thus it is with men who attend hounds; they must be kept within some bounds, and in the mode of doing it lies the difficulty. As "a soft answer turneth away wrath," so, perhaps, a gentle rebuke to a too-forward rider, at certain times, has more effect than a coarser expression. The more popular a master of foxhounds is, the better sport will he have, because every one will endeavour to promote it—I should, perhaps, rather have said, no one will wilfully mar it. As, however, next to destroyers of foxes, the greatest spoilers of sport are hard but injudicious riders, if ever you have occasion to address them, you might avail yourself of the following words, from the pen of an eminent sportsman:—

'"A good sportsman will, as often as possible, ride parallel with the pack, not after them, unless, by short turns, he is obliged to do otherwise; by these means he can see everything that is going on, and anticipate the probable cause of the hounds coming to a fault. For example, a village, a farm-house, a team at plough, men at work, sheep, and, above all, cattle, are the things most likely to impede the scent. When any of these objects present themselves in the face of hounds, you may then anticipate a check, and by pulling up your horse, and observing which way the pack inclined before the check, their huntsman will be able to hold them on in the most likely direction to hit off the scent again." And you yourself, as huntsman, will obtain a lesson here. If casting is necessary, you should be directed by the pace or degree of scent which you brought to the place where your hounds threw up; for if you came quickly, and your hounds are not blown (be sure attend to that), you make a quick cast in the direction towards which they were inclining, by forming a small circle first, and a larger one afterwards, if you are not successful with the first; but if your hounds are blown, you should invariably cast them very quietly, and hold them back, for when hounds have run hard for a long way, they lose their noses for want of wind, and run beyond the scent, especially if there is water in their view. In a fair country, and with hounds in good condition, it is my opinion that, if the foregoing observations are carried into effect, few foxes would escape. Patience is a great performer in the chase. All hounds, in these times, are well enough bred; and all hounds have power enough (if judiciously handled) to kill a good fox.

'Treat your servants well, and, if you have fault to find with their performance, rebuke them mildly in the field, and lecture them afterwards in private. The submission of inferiors is not enough; their hearts must be won; and I had rather witness human weakness than human insensibility at any time, which latter propensity every man displays who wounds the feelings of a servant on every slight occasion, and this in the presence of his superiors. As has been beautifully said, "although a servant, *the spirit of a man is in him*: severity and rigour may create fear, but can never command regard."

'As regards the treatment of your horses, I need not say much, still less instruct you how to ride them. I would recommend you to breed your hunters, and, after the method adopted by a friend of mine in Devonshire, have them perfected in fencing during their colthood. It is owing to the practice of the young horses of Ireland scampering across the country in their colthood, that they are such good fencers as we find them, unless it be at timber, at which they have no practice. But my friend's plan is this: he has every description of fence in a circular space of ground, over which his colts are driven, being held by a long cord by a man standing on a stage in the centre, turning as they turn, by which means they cannot refuse their leaps. Another eminent sportsman[1] goes a different and perhaps better way to work. As soon as his colts are weaned, and turned in a paddock, a slight fence, about the height of their knees, is placed in front of the shed in which they have their corn. When they are quite used to walking over this, the fence is raised six inches or more, sufficient to make them rear up, and get their fore-legs over, and they will soon find it easier to jump, than to draw over their hind legs. When they do this freely, the fence is raised still higher, till they are obliged to make a good standing leap over it every time they go into the shed to be fed, etc. This last should be a single rail. When they are perfect at this, which they will be in the course of a month, let a ditch be digged, with the earth thrown up for a bank, instead of the rail, or by the side of it, which rail should be made higher, to prevent his preferring it to the ditch. They will at first walk into the ditch, then get their forelegs on the bank, and the hinder legs on the other side of the ditch; but, in the course of a day or two, they will quietly jump on the bank. After being perfect in this, another ditch is cut on the other side of the bank, and they will jump on and off, in a few days, as well as any hunter.

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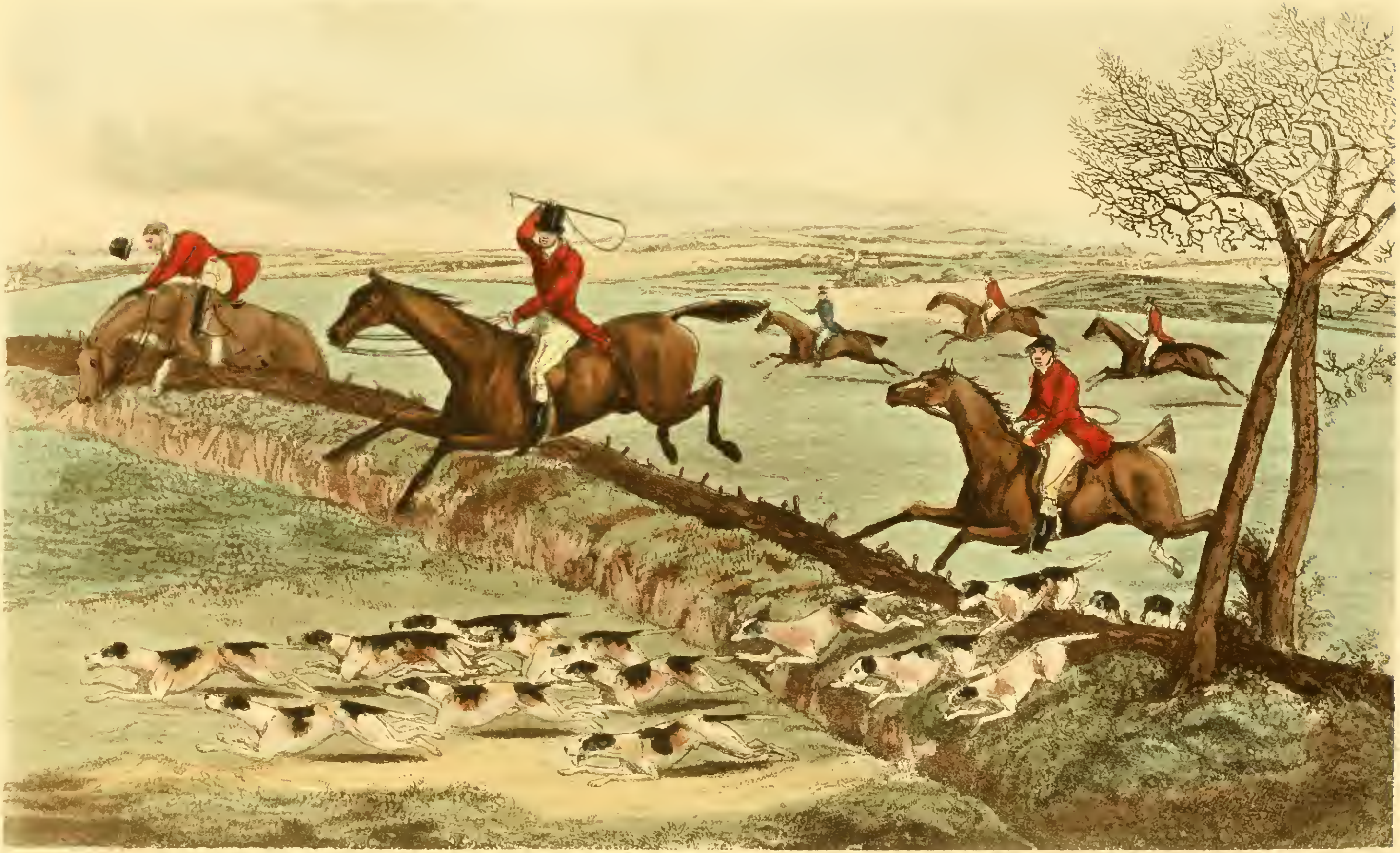
[1] See *Diary of a Huntsman.*

'The same eminent sportsman has given a useful hint on riding to hounds, which particularly applies to your country. "In the grass countries," he says, "where the fences consist of live quicks and thorns, you will do well to notice, when a hedge is cut, which way it is laid down to the top, and put your horse at it obliquely, with his head from the root of the thorn, and the top of the thorn being weak will give way to the horse's legs; but if he goes straight against it, he stands a good chance of a fall; and if he goes obliquely, on the contrary plan, he reduces his fall to a certainty, should the horse not clear any strong plasher which rises when the horse's knees are under it, but not so the other way."

'Take the advice of an old sportsman, and do not trespass too far on the willing powers of your horses. Rather than insist upon their coming home, when showing evident signs of distress, let them remain at some village for the night, leaving a whipper-in in attendance. Hundreds of good hunters have been destroyed by the neglect of this mere act of humanity towards exhausted nature in a noble and willing animal.

'On the subject of scent, I shall say nothing at present. Few subjects ever excited more speculation, or the exercise of more reasoning theory, than the one in question; but, like the peasant of the Alps, who looked abroad for happiness, we do not appear to have acquired anything satisfactory by the search. Harsh, drying winds, or impending storms, appear to be the greatest obstacles to hounds working, but in the face of all other apparently unfavourable circumstances, brilliant runs have been experienced. Of its fleeting nature, perhaps the most remarkable instance was related to me by a brother



Our hero's first run with his own hounds.

master of hounds, on whose veracity I can depend. He lost his fox at eleven o'clock, A.M. At two o'clock, P.M., he passed the place on his road home, and was told that his fox had passed a certain gateway.

'"Impossible," said his huntsman, "for we tried that point."

'"I saw him," said a man at plough.

'"And so did I," added his fellow-servant.

'Sure enough the scent was there, and spoken to by half the pack, although too weak to carry on the chase beyond the next field. After this, who can speculate on the certainty or uncertainty of scent?

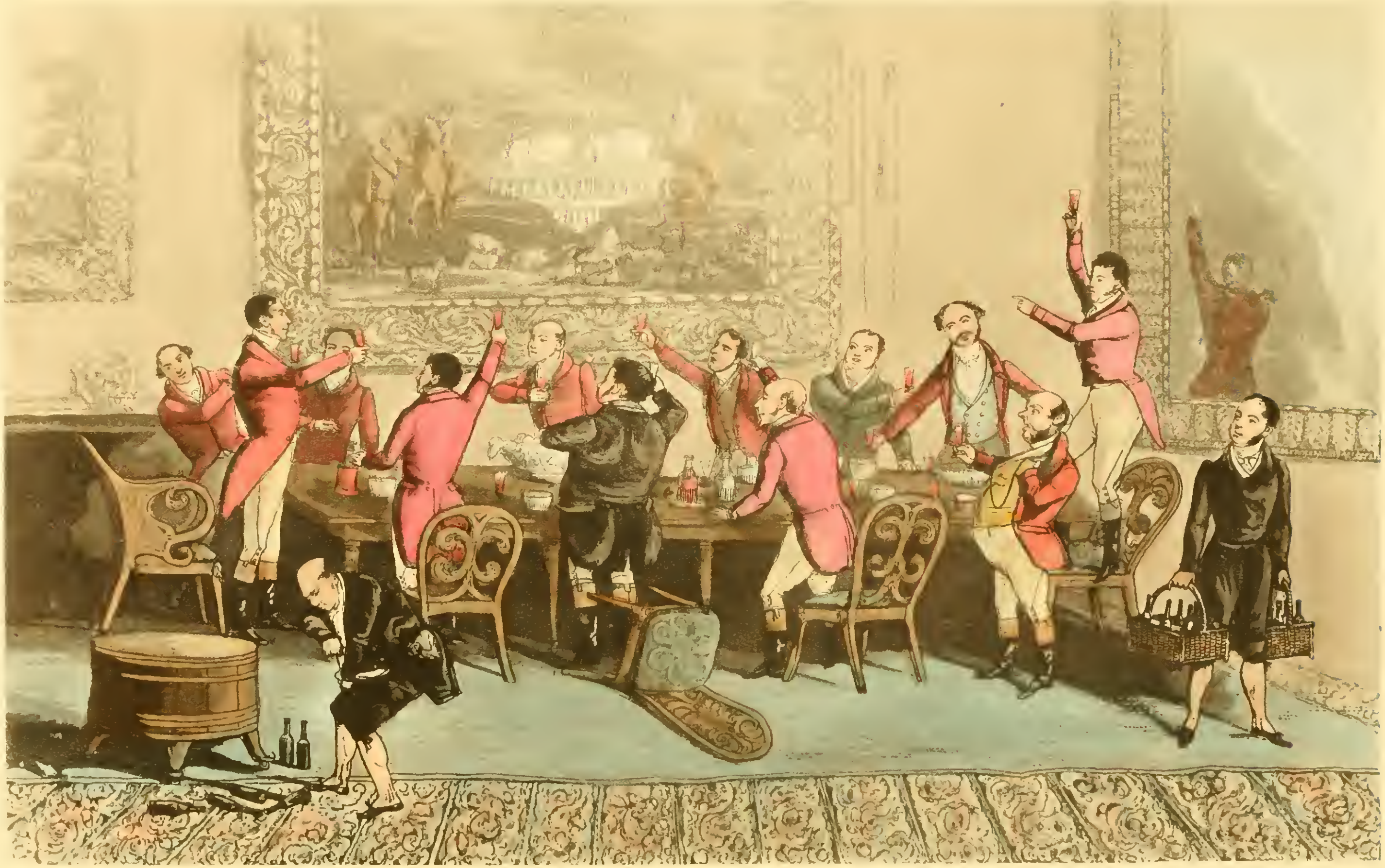
'As regards the strength of your establishment, it may be considered presumptuous my dictating to you on that point; but let me recommend you to have an eye to moderation in your kennel and stable. I consider four days a week as much as any man should hunt hounds, and it is also the best arrangement as regards his kennel, inasmuch as he then divides it into packs which, for the most part, work together. By thus becoming acquainted with each other, they work steadier and better, and occasion the death instead of the loss of many a stout fox. Seventy couples of good working hounds will suffice; and, unless some unforeseen, untoward circumstances arise, you will never have occasion to add to this amount. Of horses I would allow you quite a full complement; first, on the score of your country, which requires a strong stable; secondly, because it also requires that things should be done in a first-rate style. I should say, then, that you should have fourteen horses for your own riding, and twelve for the use of your whippers-in. Let the latter be horses of power, but with sufficient breeding for your country; strong horses not only last longer than slight ones, but they are not so liable to being lamed at fences by the superior strength of their muscles, and the firmer texture of their skin. As to the mixture or separation of the sexes of the hounds in the field, there are so many opinions on the subject, that I scarcely like to hazard mine. There is an objection against all bitches in the pack in a woodland country, in the inferior power of their tongues; but that will not operate with you; and it is contended that, although quicker and readier in their work than dog hounds, they are not so patient in difficulties. The safer plan, then, may be to mix the sexes in the field. This will about balance the account. I would, however, advise you to have more bitches than dogs in your kennel, with a view to future proceedings.'

We must now bring this tale to an end. Our hero established himself as a master of foxhounds, in one of the best countries in England, hunting them himself with the greatest satisfaction to his field, and being generally considered one of the most popular of his class. Availing himself of his own experience as a sportsman, and also of the suggestions of those who had long preceded him in his calling, he distinguished himself as a huntsman before the closing of his second season, and the fame and reputation of 'RABY'S HOUNDS' filled all the houses and stables in their country. His private character, likewise, was in no less esteem. Observant of all the relations of social life, he gained the approbation of the good; his example went far towards reclaiming the evil propensities of the bad; and in the narrower sphere of private friendship, society cannot often produce a better specimen of this princely virtue than that exhibited by Frank Raby. That he never entered into the married state may excite surprise, but he had more than once been heard to assign his reasons for remaining single. In the first place, he was unwilling to disturb his excellent mother in the enjoyment of Amstead Abbey as her home, and she lived until he had passed his fortieth year. Secondly, although he acknowledged the truth of the assertion, that the heart of man is like a creeping plant, which withers unless it have something round which it can entwine, he had imbibed the notion, and much that he had seen and heard unfortunately tended to confirm it, that a man devoted, like himself, to the sports of the field, was scarcely fitted for the married state.

'Not one woman in fifty,' he would say, 'is a suitable wife for such a man, and that one it might not have been my luck to find.'

Then, although far from being insensible to female charms, he was somewhat mistrustful of the duration of their power; and the following couplet was often on his tongue, when matrimony and its joys became the subject of discourse:

'Love may expire; the gay, the happy dream
May turn to scorn, indifference, or esteem.'



“The Master of the Raby Hunt—one cheer more.”

At all events, he remains a bachelor, and the question will be asked 'Who is to inherit the family estates at his decease?' This is answered in a few words. A younger brother of his father, not hitherto mentioned in these pages, has three sons, and to the eldest of them will the entail be continued. But why has he not been mentioned? For the simple reason, that his residence has been in India since his twentieth year, and his reason for having made it such, was the honourable feeling that an imprudent marriage, as regarded station in life, had, as he imagined, rendered him somewhat obnoxious to the rest of his family. Imprudent it might have been, inasmuch as it dropped him a degree in the nicely-balanced general scale of refined society, in other words, to a certain extent he had lost caste; unhappy, it was not, for a better wife no man possessed, and it is more than probable that this very circumstance may have had some weight in the breast of his kind-hearted nephew, in determining him to continue in the single state. At all events, a bachelor he remains, and rather an old one at present: but his house is occasionally the resort of all the best families in the neighbourhood; and, by his general conduct and deportment to all classes of persons, he shows, beyond the power of refutation, that it is possible for a gentleman to devote himself, with enthusiasm, to all the sports of flood and field, simultaneously with the performance of all the duties imposed upon him, both by God and man.

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